

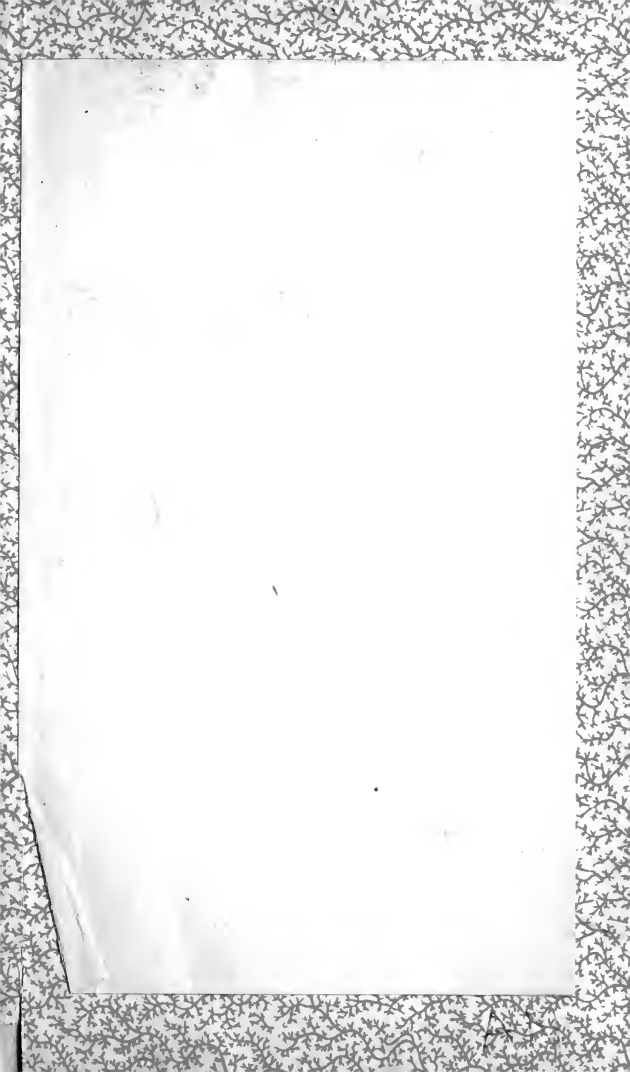
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SKETCHES

OF THE LIFE OF THE LATE,
REV. SAMUEL HOPKINS, D. D.

Pastor of the first Congregational Church in Newport,

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF;

INTERSPERSED WITH MARGINAL NOTES

EXTRACTED FROM HIS PRIVATE DIARY :

TO WHICH IS ADDED ;

A DIALOGUE,

BY THE SAME HAND,

ON THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF TRUE
CHRISTIAN SUBMISSION ;

ALSO, A SERIOUS ADDRESS TO

PROFESSING CHRISTIANS :

CLOSED BY DR. HART'S SERMON AT HIS
FUNERAL :

WITH AN INTRODUCTION TO THE WHOLE,
BY THE EDITOR.

PUBLISHED BY
STEPHEN WEST, D. D.
Pastor of the Church in Stockbridge.

PUBLISHED ACCORDING TO ACT OF CONGRESS.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE knowledge of the lives and characters of such as have been eminent for piety and usefulness, can hardly fail of being instructive and edifying. We trace, in them, the footsteps of divine power and providence in preparing them for service in the kingdom of Christ, and to be blessings to the world. And the examples we have, in them, of the manner and several steps by which they attained, through the blessing of God, to eminence in knowledge and piety, are greatly fitted to inspire candid minds with a desire to imitate them.

In these views, the memoirs of few lives have been presented to the public, which may be expected to be more entertaining and useful, than those of the late *Rev. Dr. Samuel Hopkins*. These, the reader will find contained in "Sketches" written by the Doctor himself; which were composed and arranged in a late period of his life. The former part was written before the attack of that paralytic disorder, which, finally, occasioned his death: the latter, after it. By

the last it appears, that however his nervous system and bodily organs had been affected by the shock, his mental powers remained entire ; being scarcely at all impaired, either by age, or by a disorder, which usually debilitates the *mind* as well as the body. The manner in which the following sketches are written, and the unaffected simplicity in which they appear, cannot fail of engaging the attention and esteem of the pious and judicious reader.

With a mind naturally clear and discerning, he appeared, in early life, to have felt the power of divine truth, and to have imbibed the sentiments and spirit of christianity. And so deep were the impressions made, by the power and spirit of God, on his conscience, and on his heart, that he was soon brought to a fixed, settled determination of mind to devote himself—his powers—his all—his life to the service of Christ. The work of the gospel ministry being more congenial with the feelings of his heart than any other employment in life, he early, on leaving college, engaged in a course of study with a view of being qualified for it. As this was the work for which his heart thirsted, he judged that, in this, he might be most useful. The deep and solemn sense he had of its importance, and the views and sentiments with which he entered upon it,

may be seen in some of the *extracts from his private diary* inserted in marginal notes.

As his mind was peculiarly formed for study and improvement, he was favored with a bodily constitution capable of enduring greater and more constant application, than most others. Few men have spent more hours in study and intense application, than Doctor Hopkins : And few have made such advances and improvements in knowledge. His studies were more confined to divinity, than those of most men of his genius and application. This was the subject, which was ever nearest his heart—In this was his great delight. And the uncommon proficiency he made in the knowledge of divine truth, and the extensive acquaintance he gained with the doctrines of the christian religion, have enabled him greatly to benefit mankind by his publications.

He possessed an unusual talent of opening and explaining the holy scriptures—To him their doctrines and instructions seemed familiar. His mind appeared readily to enter into the spirit, and comprehend the meaning of passages, which, to others were obscure. And, though he did not neglect consulting expositors and commentators, with whose works he was well acquainted, his uncommon discernment of the sense and impor-

of the sacred writings, seemed to arise, rather from a peculiar relish of divine truth, than from any assistance he derived from others—He appeared to be an example of the truth of our Saviour's words, "if thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."

The natural strength and powers of mind he possessed—his great application—and the clear and comprehensive view he had of the doctrines of divine revelation, very evidently appear in his various publications; but more especially, in that *System of divinity*, contained in two volumes, with which the public has lately been favored. *This will remain a lasting monument of uncommon ability and application, as well as extensive knowledge and piety.* Nowhere can the reader find the doctrines of the sacred writers so clearly drawn out to view, so justly arranged, and so fully and unanswerably vindicated as in this:—Nor is there, probably, any other human composition extant, from which so good an understanding may be obtained of the gospel-plan of salvation by Christ—the terms on which this salvation may be had—and, the temper and character necessary to the enjoyment of it. Here the reader finds those doctrines, which are generally most unwelcome to the human heart—such as those, of the total moral depravity of human

nature—the absolute decrees of God—particular election—universal divine providence and agency—and the distinguishing doctrines of *grace*, all treated with great perspicuity and clearness; and, supported by a strength of argument, both from reason and the holy scriptures, which, it is thought, will forever exceed the ability of opposers to answer or overthrow. No human composition, it is apprehended, can be read with greater profit, by students in divinity, than these volumes. From these may be obtained a better and more extensive acquaintance with the doctrines of divine revelation, than from many of the more voluminous writings of ancient, though respectable divines.

To Doctor Hopkins are we indebted for a better understanding of the design and end of what are generally termed *the means of grace*, and their use and application *as they respect impenitent, unconverted sinners*, than was before had. His discerning mind, in the early part of his public ministry, discovered a manifest inconsistency in the *exhortations and directions given to unbelievers* by eminent divines, with the *doctrines* they publicly taught and strenuously maintained. Though the doctrine of the total moral depravity and corruption of the human heart was clearly taught, and forcibly urged by Calvinistic divines;

and, clear evidence produced from the holy scriptures, that all the exercises of the natural heart—all the doings and services of unregenerate sinners, were, not only unacceptable, but hateful in the sight of God; yet to *such doings and services* did the unregenerate find themselves exhorted and urged; and *this* as the appointed way to obtain the favor of God and converting grace. Though the *doctrines* were just and scriptural, the *exhortations* naturally operated, rather against, than in favor of the sinner's sensible conviction of their truth. By attending to the Doctor's writings on this important subject, it soon became obvious, that, as the holy scriptures require the immediate exercise of godly sorrow and repentance, sinners of no description are ever to be exhorted to any other doings, or supposed duties, than such as imply love to God and holiness.

No uninspired divine, before Doctor Hopkins, had ever set this subject in a proper and scriptural light. And the benefit derived to the christian cause, from his writings on this interesting and important subject, is sufficient to compensate the study and labors of a whole life.

On account of his publications relative to this subject, he was the object of much obloquy and

reproach. These he bore with great patience and meekness; supported by a full conviction, that it was in the cause of truth he suffered; and, by a hope and firm persuasion, that the sentiments he had advanced were truly evangelical, would gain ground and become prevalent among the friends of truth and vital piety, and be blessed to the benefit of the cause of christianity in general. And, through the goodness of God, he was preserved in life to see the sentiments he had advanced on this subject in connexion with other important doctrines of divine revelation, obtain greater spread and prevalence than he had, probably, ever expected would have been in his day.

By people of piety and discernment Doctor Hopkins was esteemed one of the best of preachers. Though his public discourses were less adapted to the passions, than those of many others, they were unusually full of matter and excellent instruction, fitted to reach the conscience, and the heart, and to feed and nourish the lovers of truth and vital religion. Avoiding those abstruse reasonings, which tend rather to confound, than to instruct the hearer, his sermons were clear, perspicuous and scriptural. Few, who paid any tolerable attention, ever found difficulty in understanding him. He

neither concealed, nor disguised what he viewed as truth, however unpalatable, through fear of its being unpopular. However ungrateful the sentiments he delivered might be to some, he ever meant to be understood. And so peculiarly fitted were his public discourses to carry conviction, that such as were not altogether friendly to doctrines he often taught, were yet at a loss, when they heard him, to find any place for objection. He dwelt much on experimental religion, and was eminently an evangelical preacher. Few men equalled him in that air of solemnity and gravity, in the pulpit, which rarely fails of engaging the attention of an audience. And, as his delivery was far from being unanimated, his manner was such as gave reason to suppose he felt what he spoke. He, accordingly, exceeded most others in solemnizing his hearers and commanding attention, wherever he preached.

As he observes in the sketches of his life, he was never favored with any general awakening and attention to religion among the people of his own immediate charge. This, as the reader will find, he considers as an argument against the sincerity of his christian profession. But when we reflect, that there is no divine promise, that the success of ministerial labors among a people, shall be in proportion to the wisdom and fidelity with

which they are discharged ; this ought to be considered as an objection of little weight against his piety and faithfulness. To estimate the character and fidelity of a gospel preacher by the number of conversions, which are effected under his immediate ministrations, would go near to reproach the great Saviour himself. But few, comparatively, were brought to the love of the truth under the ministrations of Christ on earth—He was then, as has been the case ever since, generally despised and rejected of men. And though it be a great mercy, and a very rich blessing—meriting eternal thankfulness and praise, to be made instrumental of conversions amongst the people to whom we preach, it is yet to be remembered, the glorious God ever shows himself a *sovereign* in the bestowment of saving, converting grace. Though *Paul* plant, and *Apollos* water, it is *God* who gives the increase.

Weaker means and instruments are, many times, peculiarly owned, and blessed to the salvation of sinners ; while such as, to human view, are more able, seem left to complain, *we have labored in vain*. Things are wisely ordered to minister universal conviction, that the power is all of God.

Doctor Hopkins seems to have been raised up,

in divine providence, rather for ministering light, comfort, and edification to christians ; opening, explaining and enforcing the true doctrines of the gospel of Christ, and benefiting the church at large and mankind by his instructions ; than for gathering new subjects into the family and kingdom of God. And, in these respects, he shone as a star of the first magnitude ; though he was not without the other seal of his ministry.

The principal features of the Doctor's character appear in his publications, and those *sketches* of his life, which are now offered to public view. There are others, however, which it is desirable should be known.

Honored as I was with his friendship, I may be liable to prejudice : But, on long and intimate acquaintance, it has appeared to me, that he possessed a *candor of mind* which is rarely to be found. Men of the first abilities and acquirements, like others, are apt to be tenacious of opinions they have once imbibed. Having formed them, as they apprehend, on mature thought and deliberation, they soon become possessed of a prejudice unfavorable to light and evidence, which might correct them. Rare it was, that any one was capable of detecting an error in the

sentiments of Doctor Hopkins on moral and religious subjects. But he was remarkably open to conviction, whenever evidence was exhibited of the incorrectness of any of his opinions. Truth appeared to be so much the object of his search, that he discovered an unusual readiness to admit it, from whatever quarter it came; and *that* even though he might find error in himself detected by it. Did we, all, search the scriptures without *any* prepossession or prejudice, we should undoubtedly imbibe truth without error.

As might be expected with such candor of mind, his manner, in verbal dispute, was unusually mild, fair, and moderate. Far from being overbearing, he ever gave every just advantage to his opponent; patiently hearing whatever he advanced in favor of his opinions, and giving him full opportunity to vindicate them by every argument he thought favorable. And as the Doctor had a happy talent of expressing his own arguments with peculiar perspicuity; by these means he often convinced and gained over his opposers; when, had his manner been austere and overbearing, however conclusive his arguments, the opposite party would have remained unconvinced and received no benefit.

He had a mind peculiarly formed for friendship ; and appeared to be indeed the faithful friend. No one entered into greater nearness and intimacy of christian friendship, or gave, or seemed to enjoy greater pleasure in the society and friendship of christians. And his unaffected ease and openness, together with the instructiveness of his conversation were such, as made his company greatly sought, and his friendship highly valued by the lovers of religion and truth.

He never appeared desirous of enriching himself and laying up treasures on earth. As he possessed but a moderate portion of worldly substance, he never sought opportunities to enlarge it. Having but little, he was content with little. The congregation, to which he ministered in Newport was small : and though he was highly esteemed by the people of his charge, he yet received but a scanty support from them. What he stately received was in weekly contributions : but, though content with moderate living, this was insufficient without assistance from other quarters.

Considering his worldly circumstances and the scantiness of his means, he was uncommonly liberal—He took pleasure in ministering to the relief of the necessitous. Many striking in-

stances of this, though conducted with secrecy and unaffected modesty, will be remembered by those, who experienced his liberality. He uniformly contributed, on quarterly meetings for prayer; and, on one of those occasions, an hundred dollars, which he appropriated to the promotion of the gospel among the Africans. This was, probably, out of the money he unexpectedly received for the copy-right of his "System," which he mentions in the sketches of his life. Without this, it cannot well be supposed, he would have had it in his power to make so large and generous a donation. To have the gospel preached in Africa, and the knowledge of divine truth diffused there, was an object, in his view, of very great importance—His mind and his heart were much upon it. The conviction he had of the wickedness of enslaving our fellow men, and of the injuries we had done to the nations of that continent, impressed him with a sense of peculiar obligation on us, to contribute, as far as in our power, to the promotion of their spiritual good. This, he considered, as the best compensation we are capable of making for our flagrant abuses of them, and the very great injustice we have done them. Nor can we exhibit proper evidence of genuine repentance toward God, for the wickedness of which we have been guilty in enslaving the negroes, with-

out much exertion to bring that unhappy people to the knowledge and acknowledgement of the truth as it is in Jesus.

Doct^r Hopkins had great command of his natural temper—Unkind treatment from others, he bore with great patience and meekness. The requisite qualification of a bishop, *that he be not soon angry*, he possessed. Passionate anger was rarely visible in him—No instance of it had been observed, for many years before his death. Though far from being unfeeling, he appeared calm and serene under afflictions, many of which he experienced by deaths in his own family, and by the loss of other near and dear friends. That they were all in the hand of Christ, seemed to be the principal support and comfort of his heart.

His “Treatise” on the Millennium, at the close of the “System of doctrines” which he published some few years before his death, discovers, not only his firm belief and joyful hope of the coming and approach of that happy period; but, his careful study and great application to the prophetic writings, and comprehensive view and understanding of the general scheme of scripture prophecy. He has fixed the commencement of this happy state at the same period with other the most noted and judicious writers on the subject.

At the close of the treatise, he gives his opinion what events, according to scripture prophecy, may be expected to take place, before the commencement of the happy, peaceful state of the church upon earth. How far the opinion he has given on this subject is authorized and supported by scripture authority, every reader will judge for himself. It will be recollected that this was published, A. D. 1793, and must, of course, have been written and prepared sometime before. That series of mighty revolutions and remarkable events, more particularly in Europe, which have, since, astonished the world, had then scarcely commenced. But no attentive reader, who carefully reviews that scene of events, and evils of various kinds, which have taken place since that period, can help observing a striking coincidence of the subsequent events with the predictions. So visible a correspondence of events, and those of various and different kinds, with what the Doctor has considered and foretold as likely to take place previously to the Millennium, and preparatory to it, would almost lead some to think that he was endued with a prophetic spirit. So far from this however, that he himself considered all pretences of this kind at the present day, by whomever made, as wholly without foundation, and a mark and evidence of great delusion.

“ I esteemed it a peculiar favor that the Doc-
“ tor was spared, though in such a state of weak-
“ ness, that he had an opportunity of conversing
“ but a little with his friends, to exhibit a most
“ striking example of patience and submission to
“ the divine will.

“ He possessed an uninterrupted peace ; and
“ though he could say but little, through his great
“ inward weakness, yet he seemed to dwell in
“ the clearest views of divine truth. The glory,
“ which would arise to God, in the salvation of
“ sinners, filled his soul with ineffable joy. He
“ had not one anxious thought about death—re-
“ joiced that he was in the hand of Christ, and
“ wholly at his disposal. He thought much
“ on those words “ *the glory that should follow !*”
“ —Said he sometimes had *the joy of faith*. He
“ was greatly refreshed to see the wonderful
“ work of God, in the congregation, under the
“ preaching of the man, whom he introduced ;
“ and, gave his approbation and blessing to those,
“ who joined the church at this time—”.

“ He sensibly declined for better than two
“ weeks ; and, for more than two days, his
“ bodily distress was beyond description. He
“ felt himself going, and said he was willing.
“ His reason was perfect to the last, and his pa-

“ tience, in his agonies, astonishing. After a
 “ very distressing turn we laid him down in his
 “ bed—he seemed easier; and while a number
 “ of us were sitting round him, he breathed his
 “ last without a sigh or a groan—nor could we
 “ tell the moment in which he went !”

Thus died this excellent man, who has been so great a blessing, and whose praise is in the churches. *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.* Though his personal labors on earth are at an end, their happy and beneficial effects still remain, and are and will be thankfully enjoyed and rejoiced in by many. Though he is gone, the excellent writings he has left behind him, are still read with pleasure and profit; and generations yet to come, we trust, will receive benefit and instruction from them.

That the following “ sketches” of the life of the late Doctor Hopkins may be entertaining, instructive and useful—That they may excite thankful acknowledgements to God for his great mercy in raising up so eminently faithful a servant, so long preserving his valuable life, and strengthening him to go through such a series of useful labors—That they may awaken the friends of Christ to earnest and constant prayerfulness, that

a double portion of the excellent spirit, which appeared to be in him, might descend and rest on his brethren in the ministry, whom he has left behind—And especially, that they may be the means of quickening ministers of the gospel to application, to duty and to faithfulness, and to more constant, earnest prayerfulness to God—That these may be the happy effects of the publication of the following “life,” is the desire and prayer of the

EDITOR.

LIFE OF

SAMUEL HOPKINS, D. D.

SOME brief sketches of my past life, which I am induced to recollect, and commit to writing, for my own benefit, and for the gratification, and, perhaps, advantage of those of my particular friends, and relatives, who shall survive me; being now in the seventy-fifth year of my age.

I WAS born at Waterbury in Connecticut, on the Lord's day, September 17, 1721, My parents were professors of religion; and I descended from christian ancestors, both by my father and my mother, as far back as I have been able to trace my descent. I conclude I and my ancestors descended from those called *Puritans* in the days of queen Elizabeth, above two hundred years ago, and have continued to bear that denomination, since, and were the first settlers of New-England. This I have considered to be the most

honourable and happy descent, to spring from ancestors, who have been professors of religion, without interruption during the course of two hundred years, and more : and many of them, if not all *real christians*. And I have considered it as a favour that I was born on the sabbath, and was perhaps publicly dedicated to Christ by baptism on the day in which I was born ; and if not, certainly soon after.

As soon as I was capable of understanding, and attending to it, I was told that my father, when he was informed that he had a son born to him, said, if the child should live, he would give him a public education, that he might be a minister or a sabbath-day-man, alluding to my being born on the sabbath.

I was the first child of my parents that lived: They had one before, which was not alive when born, or died as soon as born. My mother was twenty years old when I was born, and my father thirty.

I have considered it as a great favour of God, that I was born and educated in a religious family, and among a people, in a country town, where a regard to religion and morality was common and prevalent; and the education of

children and youth was generally practised in such a degree that young people were generally orderly in their behaviour, and abstained from those open vices, which were then too common in seaport and populous places. I do not recollect that I ever heard a profane word from the children and youth, with whom I was conversant, while I lived with my parents, which was till I was in my fifteenth year.

I from my youth was not volatile and wild, but rather of a sober and steady make, and was not guilty of external irregularities, such as disobedience to parents, profanation of the sabbath, lying, foolish jesting, quarrelling, passion and anger, or rash and profane words; and was disposed to be diligent and faithful in whatever business I was employed; so that as I advanced in age, I gained the notice, esteem and respect of the neighbourhood. I was, in general, greatly careless about all invisible things; but was often plotting for something, which then appeared to me good and great in this life; and often indulged and pleased myself with vain and foolish imaginations of what I should be and do in this world. And sometimes, though rarely, had some serious thoughts of God, and about my soul and a future world of happiness and misery. And I once had a dream of the future judgment,

in some measure agreeable to the representation made of it by Christ himself in the xxvth chapter of Matthew. I dreamed that I and a brother of mine, who was about two years younger than me, were sentenced to everlasting misery, and driven down to hell, with the rest of the wicked. This greatly impressed my mind, for a long time after. And the impression then made has not wholly worn off to this day.

As my father was a farmer, I was employed in labouring on the farm, with which business I was pleased, and made proficiency in it. I was frequently told, and often thought of the declaration of my father on the day on which I was born, *that he would bring me up to college*, as the phrase then was for a public education. But I felt no particular inclination to this; but was rather inclined to labour on a farm: But what always turned my mind against going to college, was the years of absence from my parents and their family, which were involved in it. Such absence was intolerable to my childish mind, and was sufficient to suppress the thought of going to learning.

But in the winter after I was fourteen years old, I retired much to a chamber in my father's house, and spent considerable time in reading, especially

reading the bible ; and began to feel more inclination to learning, and less to working on a farm ; as our farming business did not go on so well as it had done, by reason of some particular circumstances which had taken place. When my father perceived this, he told me, if I was inclined to go to learning, he would put me to a place where I might be fitted for the college. To which I readily consented. Accordingly, I was put under the care and tuition of the Rev. John Graham of Woodbury, which joined West or Waterbury, his meeting-house being about ten miles from my father's house. Here I fitted for college, with a number of others ; and was examined and admitted a member of college in September 1737, being sixteen years old on the seventeenth day of that month.

While a member of the college, I believe, I had the character of a sober, studious youth, and of a better scholar than the bigger half of the members of that society ; and had the approbation of the governours of the college. I avoided the intimacy and the company of the openly vicious ; and indeed kept but little company, being attentive to my studies. In the eighteenth or nineteenth year of my age, I cannot now certainly determine which, I made a

profession of religion, and joined the church to which my parents belonged in Waterbury. I was serious, and was thought to be a pious youth, and I had this thought and hope of myself. I was constant in reading the bible, and in attending on public and secret religion. And sometimes at night, in my retirement and devotion, when I thought of confessing the sins I had been guilty of that day, and asking pardon, I could not recollect that I had committed one sin that day. Thus ignorant was I of my own heart, and of the spirituality, strictness and extent of the divine law!! In this time I was at home, in a vacancy at college; and several men, who were gross Arminians, entered into a dispute with me about doctrines and religion. I was in theory a Calvinist, and attempted to defend that scheme of doctrines, in opposition to them. In these we could not agree: But when we came to talk of practical religion, and of conversion, I agreed with them, allowing it to consist chiefly in externals, overlooking the real and total depravity of the heart, and the renovation and great change which must take place in that, in order to true conversion and the exercise of real religion, having never experienced any thing of this kind. My mother heard the conversation; and after the company was gone, she told me, she was surprised to hear me agree with them in their no-

tion of conversion; and that I should think real conversion was no more than that which I and they had described. This put me upon thinking, and raised a suspicion in my own mind that I was a stranger to real conversion. But it wore off, without any abiding conviction of my deficiency.

From this experience of mine, I have been led to fear, and, in many instances, to conclude persons to be strangers to true conversion, who appear to have the same or no better notion of it, than I then had, and talk much as I did on that head, while they profess to believe Calvinistic doctrines, though they choose to be considered as *moderate Calvinists*. There are many of this sort of professing christians, with whom I have been acquainted. When persons build upon such a false foundation, and set out in religion, and think themselves christians, without being *born of God*, and continue strangers to a true and sound conversion; they will be inclined to oppose or slight the most important and excellent exercises of experimental religion, and will be dry and fruitless christians, and ignorant of true religious affections and enjoyments. And it will be no wonder if they lose all their zeal for the peculiar doctrines of the gospel, and

grow indifferent about them ; if they do not gradually give them up, and renounce them.

While I was in this state and situation of mind, Mr. Whitefield came into New-England ; and after he had preached in Boston, and other places, came to New-Haven, in his way to New-York. The attention of people in general was greatly awakened upon hearing the fame of him, that there was a remarkable preacher from England travelling through the country. The people flocked to hear him, when he came to New-Haven. Some travelled twenty miles out of the country to hear him. The assemblies were crowded and remarkably attentive ; and people appeared generally to approve, and their conversation turned chiefly about him and his preaching. Some disapproved of several things which he advanced, which occasioned considerable dispute. I heard him when he preached in public, and when he expounded in private in the evening ; and highly approved of him ; and was somewhat impressed by what he said in public and in private ; but did not in the least call in question my own good estate, that I remember. He preached against mixed dancing and frolicing of males and females together : which practice was then very common in New-England. This offended some, especially young people. But I

remember I justified him in this in my own mind, and in conversation with those who were disposed to condemn him. This was in October 1740, when I had entered on my last year in college.

During that fall and the succeeding winter, there appeared to be much more attention to religion, than before, among people in general : And a number of ministers in New-England were aroused, and preached oftener than they had done, and appeared much more engaged and zealous, than before ; and several came to New-Haven and preached in a manner so different from what had been usual, that people in general appeared to be in some measure awakened, and more thoughtful on religious subjects, than they had been before.

Early in the next spring, in March, Mr. Gilbert Tennent, who had been itinerating in New-England, in Boston and other places in the winter, came to New-Haven from Boston, in his way to the southward. He was a remarkably plain and rousing preacher, and a remarkable awakening had been produced by his preaching, and many hopeful conversions had taken place under his preaching, where he had itinerated. On his coming to New-Haven, the people ap-

peared to be almost univerfally arouffed, and flocked to hear him. He ftayed about a week in New-Haven, and preached feventeen fermons, moft of them in the meeting-houfe ; two or three in the college hall. His preaching appeared to be attended with a remarkable and mighty power. Thoufands, I believe, were awakened ; and many cried out with diftreffs and horror of mind, under a conviction of God's anger, and their conftant expofednefs to fall into endless deftruction. Many profeffors of religion received conviction that they were not real chriftians, and never were born again ; which numbers publicly confeffed, and put up notes, without mentioning their names, but their number ; defiring prayers for them as unconverted, and under this conviction. The members of college appeared to be univerfally awakened. A fmall number thought themfelves chriftians before they came to college, and I believe were fo. Several of thefe appeared with an extraordinary zeal, and concern for the members of college ; and without paying regard to the diftinctions of higher and lower claffes, they vifited every room in college, and difcourfed freely and with the greateft plainnefs with each one ; efpecially fuch whom they confidered to be in an unconverted ftate, and who acknowledged themfelves to be fo, fetting before them their danger, and exhorting them to re-

pent, &c. The consciences of all seemed to be so far awakened as to lead them to hang their heads, and to pay at least a silent regard to their reprovers. And every person in the college appeared to be under a degree of awakening and conviction. The persons above mentioned, who thus distinguished themselves in zeal were two of them my class-mates, Buell and Youngs. The other was David Brainard. - I attended to the whole, and approved of all they said and did. But retained my hope that I was a christian, and had little or no conversation with these zealous men. At length Brainard came into my room, I being there alone. I was not at a loss with respect to his design in making me a visit then ; determining that he came to satisfy himself whether I were a christian, or not. And I resolved to keep him in the dark, and if possible prevent his getting any knowledge of my state or religion. I was therefore wholly on the reserve, being conscious that I had no religious experiences, or religious affections to tell of. In his conversation with me, he observed that he believed it impossible for a person to be converted and to be a real christian without feeling his heart, at sometimes at least, sensibly and greatly affected with the character of Christ, and strongly going out after him ; or to that purpose.—This observation struck conviction into my mind. I

verily believed it to be true, and at the same time, was conscious that I had never experienced any thing of this kind ; and that I was a stranger to the exercise of real christianity. I then determined that no one should know from me, or any other way, if I could prevent it, that I was not a christian, until I should be converted : For it was mortifying to my pride to be thought to be no christian, having made a christian profession, and having had the character of a christian for some time ; though I now knew myself not to be one. Brainard took his leave of me without bringing me to put off my reserve ; and what he then thought of me, I know not ; but believe he strongly suspected, if he did not without hesitation conclude, that I was not a christian.

My conviction fixed upon me. I saw I was indeed no christian. The evil of my heart, the hardness and unbelief of it came more and more into view ; and the evil case in which I was, appeared more and more dreadful. I felt myself a guilty, justly condemned creature, and my hope of relief by obtaining conversion failed more and more, and my condition appeared darker from day to day, and all help failed, and I felt myself to be nothing but ignorance, guilt and stupidity. I now lost all desire to conceal

my case from those whom I considered to be christians, and freely opened it to some of them. They appeared particularly to interest themselves in my condition, and often conversed with me, and asked me if I had any new views, &c. I constantly told them I was still the same, in an unconverted state, &c. Thus I continued for some weeks, generally retired, unless when I attended private meetings of young people, for prayer, &c. which were frequent then in college, and in the town.

At length as I was in my closet one evening, while I was meditating, and in my devotions, a new and wonderful scene opened to my view. I had a sense of the being and presence of God, as I never had before ; it being more of a reality, and more affecting and glorious, than I had ever before perceived. And the character of Jesus Christ the mediator came into view, and appeared such a reality, and so glorious ; and the way of salvation by him so wise, important and desirable, that I was astonished at myself that I had never seen these things before, which were so plain, pleasing and wonderful. I longed to have all see and know these things as they now appeared to me. I was greatly affected, in the view of my own depravity, the sinfulness, guilt, and odiousness of my character ; and tears flow-

ed in great plenty. After some time I left my closet, and went into the adjoining room, no other person being then there. I walked the room, all intent on these subjects, and took up Watts's version of the psalms, and opened it at the fifty-first psalm, and read the first, second and third parts in long metre with strong affections, and made it all my own language, and thought it was the language of my heart to God; I dwelled upon it with pleasure, and wept much. And when I had laid the book aside, my mind continued fixed on the subject, and in the exercise of devotion, confession, adoration, petition, &c. in which I seemed to pour out my heart to God with great freedom. I continued all attention to the things of religion, in which most appeared more or less engaged. There were many instances, as was then supposed, of conversion. I felt a peculiar, pleasing affection to those, who were supposed to be christians.

But two things appear, now, to me remarkable, with respect to my views and exercises which I have just now mentioned. *First*, I had not then the least thought or suspicion that what I had experienced was conversion, or any thing like it, nor did such a thought enter my mind, so far as I can recollect, till near a year after this, or if any such thought was suggested at any

time, it was immediately rejected. I had formed an idea in my mind of conversion, what persons who were converted must be, and how they must feel, which was so entirely different from that which I had seen and felt, that I was so far from a thought that I was converted, that I thought I *knew* I was not, and made no scruple to tell my friends so, from time to time. *Secondly*, I do not recollect that I said a word to any person living of these exercises, or gave the least hint of them to any one for almost a year after they took place. I did not think they were worth speaking of, being nothing like conversion. And by degrees I ceased to recollect any thing of them, still hoping and looking for something greater and better, and of quite a different kind.

When I heard Mr. Tennent, as mentioned above, I thought he was the greatest and best man, and the best preacher that I had ever seen or heard. His words were to me, "like apples of gold in pictures of silver." And I then thought that when I should leave the college, as I was then in my last year, I would go and live with him, wherever I should find him. But just before the commencement in September, when I was to take my degree, on the seventeenth day of which month I was twenty years old, Mr:

Edwards of Northampton came to New-Haven, and preached. He then preached the sermon on *the trial of the spirits*, which was afterwards printed. I had before read his sermons on justification, &c. and his narrative of the remarkable conversions at Northampton, which took place about seven years before this. Though I then did not obtain any personal acquaintance with him, any farther than by hearing him preach: yet I conceived such an esteem of him, and was so pleased with his preaching, that I altered my former determination with respect to Mr. Tennent, and concluded to go and live with Mr. Edwards, as soon as I should have opportunity, though he lived about eighty miles from my father's house.

After I had taken my first degree, which was in September 1741, I retired to my father's in Waterbury. And being dejected and very gloomy in my mind, I lived a recluse life for some months. Considering myself as a sinful lost creature, I spent most of my time in reading, meditation and prayer; and spent many whole days in fasting and prayer. My attention turned chiefly to my own sinfulness, and as being wholly lost in myself, of which I had an increasing conviction. But I also attended to the state of religion in the vicinity. There was a general

and uncommon attention to religion, and much preaching by ministers who went from town to town, but opposition was made to the revival of religion, which now began to increase among ministers and people. Some considered it as an evil work, in the whole of it. Others allowed there was some good attending it : but objected greatly to many things which took place and were practised by the friends and subjects of the work, as imprudent and wrong. I was a strong advocate for the doctrines preached by the ministers who were instruments of promoting the revival, and for the practices of those who were the subjects of it, and were supposed to be converted. It is true, there were some things said and practised, which I did not understand, and fully see through. But as I considered them as christians, and myself as not one, and consequently ignorant and incapable of judging, I concluded they must be right. I spent days in fasting and prayer, seeking the promotion of that which to me appeared to be true religion, and the suppression of all opposition to it. I endeavoured to promote religion among the young people in the town : and encouraged them who were attentive and concerned to meet together for prayer, and to spend days of fasting and prayer together ; especially those who were thought to be converted. When I saw persons,

whom I considered to be unconverted, I felt disposed to pray for them that they might be converted and saved ; and felt great concern for some individuals of this character.

In the month of December, being furnished with a horse, &c. I set out for Northampton, with a view to live with Mr. Edwards, where I was an utter stranger. When I arrived there, Mr. Edwards was not at home ; but was received with great kindness by Mrs. Edwards and the family, and had encouragement that I might live there during the winter. Mr. Edwards was abroad on a preaching tour, as people in general were greatly attentive to religion and preaching, which was attended with remarkable effects, in the conviction and supposed conversion of multitudes. I was very gloomy and was most of the time retired in my chamber. After some days Mrs. Edwards come into my chamber, and said, " As I was now become one of the family for a season, she felt herself interested in my welfare ; and she observed that I appeared gloomy and dejected, she hoped I would not think she intruded by desiring to know, and asking me what was the occasion of it," or to that purpose. I told her, the freedom she used was agreeable to me ; that the occasion of the appearance which she mentioned was the state in

which I considered myself. I was in a Christless, graceless state, and had been under a degree of conviction, and concern for myself for a number of months: Had got no relief, and my case, instead of growing better, appeared to grow worse. Upon which we entered into a free conversation. And on the whole she told me, that she had peculiar exercises respecting me, since I had been in the family; that she trusted I should receive light and comfort, and doubted not that God intended yet to do great things by me, &c. This conversation did not sensibly raise my spirits in the least degree. My views of myself were such, and my prospect and hope of any good were so low, that I then paid no sensible regard to what she said.

Religion was now at a lower ebb at Northampton, than it had been of late, and than it appeared to be in the neighbouring towns, and in New-England in general. In the month of January Mr. Buell, my class-mate, whom I mentioned before, came to Northampton, having commenced a zealous preacher of the gospel; and was the means of greatly reviving the people to zeal in religion. He preached every day, and sometimes twice a day publicly, Mr. Edwards being out of town, preaching in distant towns. Professing christians appeared greatly

revived and comforted, and a number were under conviction, and I think there were some hopeful new converts. After Mr. Buell had preached in Northampton a week or two, he set out on a tour towards Boston, to preach in the towns in those parts ; and I went with him. People crowded to hear him in every place ; and great numbers were awakened, and many were thought to be converted. After continuing with him about two weeks, I returned to Northampton, when my exercises of mind were such that I *for the first time* admitted a hope that they were really gracious, and my mind immediately recurred back to the time when I had those views and affections, almost a year before, which have been mentioned, and they appeared to me to be of the same kind with those which now possessed my mind, and that the course of exercises which I since had, did not differ in kind from the first, and from those which I now had : though I had within this time often said I was certain I had no grace ; and never had for a moment, that I can recollect, entertained the least degree of hope, or one thought that I was not in a state of nature. While at Northampton before this, I conversed with a number of christians who were thought to be knowing and eminent. I perceived that they thought I was a christian. But this did not have the least perceivable influence

on my mind, so as to excite the least hope that I was a christian : but thought and felt that I *knew* this was not, and could not, be true.*

I now determined to make known the whole of my exercises to Mr. Edwards, as far as I could communicate them. I told him my present exercises, and those which I have related which took place at college near a year before. When he had heard me, he asked me, Why I had not told him these things before ? I told him it was because I had no thought that such exercises were conversion, or christian exercises, till very lately. He gave not his opinion expressly ; nor did I desire he should ; for I was far from relying on any man's judgment in such a case. But I supposed he entertained a hope that I was a christian.

From this time I turned my thoughts upon preaching the gospel. And with a view to obtain a license to preach, I left Mr. Edwards's in the latter end of March, and went home to

* *This, with sundry notes which follow, were taken from the private diary of Mr. Hopkins.—1742* I have of late entertained a hope, that I did experience a saving change above a year ago ; and, I find myself more, and more established in it. The Lord grant that I may not be deceived ! I have some thoughts (God willing) of being examined, next week, in order to preach the sweet and everlasting gospel of Jesus. Though, many times, my heart shrinks at the thought. I hope the Lord will direct me.

Waterbury. And in May I applied to an Association of ministers for approbation ; which they granted, after I had passed and examination before them.*

* April 29 This day, I obtained a permit to go forth and preach the gospel : but this is only from men. It hath been my request, and I hope my sincere desire, that I might have a commission from the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Lord of the harvest, and be sent forth by him, as a labourer in his vineyard.

July 3. I have this day rode from Hampton to Suffield, in order to preach. By the way I was much drawn out in ardent desires that God would go with me, and that I might do something for his honor. I heard two sermons, and being desired, I preached a third. The power of the Lord came down, and many of his children were filled, with the Holy Ghost ! I had a freedom in speaking which I never had before. I could not be heard all over the meeting house, by reason of the out cries of the people. Oh ! wonderful, that the Lord should make me his instrument to feed his lambs.

Being desired, I preached again, this night, at the house where I lodged : many people came to hear the word ; and, we had the divine presence—many christians were sweetly refreshed.

August 7. Seeing Christ requires that I deny myself, take up my cross and renounce all for him, taking him for my only portion here and for ever :

I do now afresh dedicate myself to the Lord, solemnly promising to renounce all other lords, and take him for my portion. I call heaven and earth to witness, that I now take the God of heaven and earth for my God. I now make myself over, with all that I have, or ever shall have to him. I now promise allegiance to the God of heaven, that henceforth I will make it my only business to serve and honor him ; begging his gracious assistance to perform my obligations, and to keep my solemn vows inviolate. It is done, I am no more my own, but I give myself away to God, to be his forever.

S. H.

After I had preached a few times at my native place, and places adjacent, occasionally, I returned to Northampton, proposing to spend sometime in pursuing my studies with Mr. Edwards, where I lived during the summer, preaching sometimes in Mr. Edwards's pulpit, and to private meetings; and sometimes rode out to neighbouring towns, and preached; for which I neither demanded, nor received any pay, except forty shillings old tenor, for preaching one Sabbath at Westfield: which was given without any demand or expectation from me. I also preached in the fall a number of sabbaths at Bethlem to Mr. Bellamy's people, gratis, while he took a tour as far as Philadelphia in order to preach; as people in general then had a hearing ear.

In the beginning of December 1742, I was invited to preach at Symsbury in Connecticut, to a considerable congregation, who had lately left their minister; where I continued preaching most of the time till the next May. The greater part of the people appeared attentive and in some measure engaged in religion; but there were some opposers of the late revival of religion, and of the doctrines which were preached, and were much insisted upon by the friends of the revival. Though I refused to preach as a candidate, having no inclination to settle in the min-

istry at present ; yet the town insisted upon having a meeting to see if they would give me a call to settle in the work of the ministry among them. When they met, it appeared that one hundred voted to give me a call, and that thirty voted against it. I told them, that I had no thought of settling in the ministry at present : But if I had, I thought their want of unanimity, and the number of opposers was a sufficient reason for not complying with their request. I therefore left them, and went to Northampton, with a view to pursue my studies for a longer time with Mr. Edwards.*

* May 4, 1743. This evening, through the goodness of God, have had some refreshing discoveries of divine things, longing that the whole world might be brought to the knowledge of God ; and, that the children of God might live like themselves, have views of an approaching eternity, and feel the love of God in their souls. That the ministers of Christ might always experience how sweet it is, to preach Christ, and offer him to fallen undone sinners. Oh ! how sweet is it to get on mount Pisgah, and from thence behold the promised land !

August 25. Had some freedom in secret prayer, this night—was quite willing that God should stop my mouth and never suffer me to speak in his name to this people again, if he has not sent me, or if it be his will I should not ; at the same time greatly desirous that, by some means, they might be brought into the right way.

November 12. Have had more than ordinary longings after holiness and sanctification ; at the same time thirsting after God, longing to know more of him, and be more acquainted with him.

26. Had a little, but sweet glimpse of some of the attri-

But after I had continued there a few weeks, I found myself unwell, grew more and more feeble, and was attended with rheumatic pains; so as to be unable to attend to my study, as I expected: And having, at that time several invitations from distant places, to go and preach to them, I concluded it was best to *ride* as the likeliest way to recover my health. And being invited to go to a place then called *Housatnock*, which was about sixty miles from Northampton, I engaged to go there, and to preach to them two or three sabbaths. Accordingly I arrived there the beginning of July, 1743. I found they were a small people, there being but about thirty families in the town; that a number of them were poor, and generally they were without any concern about real religion, and given to many vices, which an easy country to live in, and living without the steady preaching of the gospel, or public worship, naturally produced. But as they appeared unanimous in inviting me to settle among them, after I had been there a number of sabbaths, I consented, and was ordained on the 28th day of December, just at

butes of God, in secret prayer, especially of his wisdom, justice and holiness. I saw that he knew what was best, and could do nothing but what is perfectly right and just, and infinitely best. What reason have I, to commit, all my concerns into his hands!

the end of the year 1743, when I was twenty-two years, three months, and eleven days old.*

I continued there in the work of the ministry till January 18, 1769, twenty-five years and about twenty days, when I was dismissed, by the unanimous voice of a council called on that oc-

* December 24, 1743. Have fasted in secret to day, and had some unusual assistance and enlargement. My courage is increased about settling here in the work of the ministry, being willing to go where God calls me, knowing that this life is not the place for happiness, I must wait for that, till I launch into eternity and leave my corruption behind. I hope God hath given me strength to desire his presence in the great work of the ministry.

28. I have this day solemnly and publicly given myself up to the work of the ministry. I am now engaged in a great work. Oh, that I might be faithful unto death.

August 28, 1744. This evening I have had unusual freedom in prayer—had some sense of the miserable state of my people, and some wrestlings for them.—Was enabled to give myself up afresh to Christ, taking him with his cross, being heartily willing if I might have his presence, to undergo all possible hardships and trials—was enabled with an holy scorn to trample upon, and despise the world, with all created good.

July 25, 1749. Had freedom in secret prayer this evening, I think I can safely appeal to God, and solemnly declare before him, that I desire his smiles and acceptance in his sight above all things else, that I had rather be stripped of every worldly comfort than to be without this, yea without this all the world is nothing. I am also conscious before God that I am sincere, (though alas shamefully deficient) in the great work I have undertaken, and have never declined that which I seriously thought was for the spiritual good of my people, for any worldly interest.

caſion, and the conſent of the church. During this time I had no great apparent ſucceſs in the miniſtry. A ſmall number were hopefully converted, and a number of chriſtians moved into the place in this time, which increaſed the number in the church. But the congregation in general did not attend public worſhip, except ſome times; and were not willing to ſupport the goſpel. And a number turned churchmen, apparently and ſome of them profeſſedly, to get rid of paying any thing for the ſupport of the goſpel. And ſo great a number of others reſuſed to do any thing this way, that after the church, and others who wiſhed to have me ſtay among them, had made a number of attempts, they declared there was, in their view, no proſpect or hope of my having a ſupport, if I continued with them; and therefore they could not object to my leaving them, eſpecially, if an eccleſiaſtical council ſhould adviſe. They therefore joined with me in calling a council, and laying the circumſtances of the caſe before them: who adviſed to my diſmiſſion, as mentioned above.

I then had a wife and eight children, and owned a houſe and good farm; and could, by leaving my ſtudy and attending to my farm, have ſupported myſelf and family, and continued to preach to thoſe who would come to hear me, after a ſort, with little ſtudy. But I then thought, and it was the judgment of the coun-

oil, and of the church, that as I could not be supported there, so as to be able to give myself wholly to the work of the ministry, and pursue my studies without any great interruption from worldly cares and labour, it was my duty to leave them, and go where I could be supported. And if no such place presented; I could by turning my attention to farming support myself. But since I have seen the unhappy consequences to that people of my leaving them, many of which might probably have been prevented by my staying with them, though I had studied but little, and spent great part of my time in attention to my worldly concerns, I have sometimes been ready to call in question the reasonableness of that conclusion, and have thought it probable we were all wrong in judging as we did, and that it was my duty to stay with that people in those circumstances. It is certain this would have been greatly to my *worldly* advantage. But I then thought I did right, and took the most prudent and proper steps, in taking the advice of a council, &c. And the issue rendered it necessary for me to leave the work of the ministry there. God has ordered it so, and his ends will be answered by it. This will be seen, another day; and it will be known who were the blameable instruments of bringing it about, and in what degree they were so.

In less than a year after I was ordained at Shef.

field (as it was then called ; but has since obtained the name of Great-Barrington) on December 5, 1744, my mother died at Waterbury, being about forty-three years old. She died in child-bed, and the child died soon after. My father sent for me, when it was supposed my mother was like to die. But as I lived at the distance of fifty miles, and it was difficult travelling at that time of the year, I did not get there before my mother died. This was a grievous loss to me, which touched my tender feelings to the quick, as she was a kind, tender mother, and I loved her above any other relative.

On January 13, 1748, I was married to Miss Joanna Ingersol, daughter of Moses Ingersol of Great-Barrington. And on February 5, 1749,*

* February 4, 1749. Reached my father's house late in the night, find my father very sick, and two brothers and two sisters with the measles. My father knew me and asked me why I was so long in coming? told me he sent for me that I might see him once more before he died, asked me if I did not think he was dying? I told him no: I asked him if he was willing to die, his answer was such, as gave me great concern for him. I was quickly willing to part with him if he might but give me evidence of his comfortable hope in Christ, before he died, but was soon brought to give up this point, if he might but have a saving interest in Christ, and the comfort of it in his own soul, which my soul longed for and I was enabled to seek God earnestly, on his behalf, having my mouth filled with arguments, and after all was obliged to resign, and acknowledge God to be the sovereign potter, having a right to do what he would, and that he could do no wrong.

February 5. We apprehend my father is dying, I made

my father died at Waterbury, being about fifty-eight years old. He made me executor of his will. He left three young sons, my brothers James, Daniel, and Mark. James was in his sixteenth year, Daniel in his fourteenth, and Mark in his tenth. The two oldest my father furnished with a farm, and utensils to cultivate it, proposing that they should be farmers. The youngest he committed to my care, desiring me to give him a public education, for which he left a sufficient estate. The two oldest soon got discouraged with farming, living fifty miles from me. Upon which, on their desire, I sold the farm, and took them into my own house, and fitted them all to enter the college at New-Haven. James, the oldest made such proficiency in his studies, that he entered the college before the other two. He was a promising young man, much esteemed in college; especially by his class-mates. But was taken sick with a fever before his first year at college was ended, which put an end to his life. I was sent for, when his sickness was thought to be mortal; but my house being eighty miles from New-Haven, when I got there, he was just expiring, and died in an hour or two: This was a trying scene to me!

two prayers with him, he having been sometime before speechless, revived a little, and said, *he had more hope now*, referring to the discourse I had with him before. These were almost the last words which he spake, and the most comfortable. I had some views of the infinity of God's mercy, and expressed it in prayer, and hope his soul felt it.

My other two brothers entered college after this, and were graduated. I had the whole care of their estate and of providing for them, the trouble of which was not small.

My youngest brother, Mark, studied the law, and followed that business. Was married, and had a number of children. He prospered in the world, and sustained a good and fair character : But died with sickness when engaged in the war with Britain, about the time the American army evacuated New-York, being driven out by the British, I think in the year 1776. My brother Daniel is yet living, being settled in the ministry at Salem.

It was disagreeable to me to go so far from Mr. Edwards, as I did when I settled at Great-Barrington, being at least sixty miles, with whom I had studied so long : and who was able to assist me farther to make advancement in knowledge, could I live in his neighbourhood, so as to be able to visit him often, and converse with him, &c. But I was relieved and gratified with respect to this, in a few years after my settlement, by his removing from Northampton, and settling at Stockbridge, within seven miles of my house. Mr. Sergeant, who was missionary to the Indians at Stockbridge, when I settled at Great-Barrington, died on the 27th July, 1749. The next year the commissioners in Boston, who had the

care of the Indian mission at Stockbridge, sent to me their proposal and desire that I would accept of that mission, in which invitation both the white people, and the Indians at Stockbridge earnestly joined. And the Indians sent a particular messenger to me, to intreat me to come and be their minister. My answer was, that I would take the matter into serious consideration. But as I did not think myself equal to such a situation and business, I should hesitate with regard to accepting the offer, though I should not know of any other man better qualified to take the place. But as I had one in view who was much better qualified, every way, for such a mission, if he could be obtained, as I hoped he could, if I otherwise were inclined to accept, I should refuse, in order to introduce him. Mr. Edwards was the man whom I had in view. He had been dismissed from the church in Northampton in the year 1750. I therefore wrote to the commissioners in Boston recommending him in the strongest terms, as the most proper person for that mission, and mentioned him to the white people, and to the Indians, as the most suitable man for their minister. Accordingly he was introduced and settled there in August 1751, not quite eight years after I was settled at Great-Barrington.* He continued at Stockbridge a

* Monday May 9, 1753. Visited H. D. to day, who is very sick, and is not like to continue long; her sister, E. came out of the door after me, appearing tenderly con-

little more than six years. In which time I enjoyed great pleasure and benefit by his company and conversation. But he was invited to the presidency of the college in Princeton, and in

cerned about herself desired me to pray for her, which I endeavoured to do when I got into my closet at home, and was enabled to cry to God for mercy for her soul with freedom and importunity. I cannot but hope that God enabled me to ask converting grace for her : and I humbly hope he will, in his time and way, give it. Oh ! what a sweet duty is intercession, when it is done in faith with the whole heart. Every fervent intercessor has his reward *paid down*, and his prayer immediately returns into his own bosom.

May 8. This day H. D. died, she was a desirable youth, and hopefully converted a few weeks before she was taken sick : and God was pleased to make me a mean of awakening her, which I esteem a greater favor than if he had given me the whole world. This is the first that I have evidence of the conversion of, since I have been in the place ; and surely it is well worth while to preach seven years, (which is the time I have been here) to be any ways instrumental of the conversion of one soul.

Wednesday, December 26. I have lately had distressing apprehensions of the badness of my state, being ready to conclude that such a sinner as I am, cannot possibly have any grace. This evening my spirit laboured under an unsupportable load of sin ; and, my spirits were drunk up with anguish ! As soon as I could, I shut myself up in my study, and fell upon my knees before God.

And first, I felt, and told God, that I had no where else to go but to him, though I had sinned so greatly against him. I felt and expressed, the extreme folly of forsaking him—that it was beyond all conception. I reflected on the aggravations of my sins, and saw they were so vastly multiplied and numerous, that it was impossible my mind should ever have a full view of them, or be able to reckon them. Yea, that there was *not* one aggravation, but what exceeded all my thoughts and conceptions. I thought it a wonder that I was not in hell, and confessed that God might justly send me there immediately ; yea he might justly do what was unspeakably

the beginning of January 1758. He was dismissed from Stockbridge by the advice of a council. This was a fore trial to me, to have him thus taken from my neighbourhood, by which I

more dreadful, viz. continue me in the world till I had filled up the dreadful measure of my iniquities, and become a great and remarkable vessel of wrath, fitted for that destruction, for which I was before appointed; that I might sink down unspeakably below *Judas*, and bear a more awful weight of wrath, than any other who should go to hell.

Under these shocking apprehensions of the weight of wrath which belonged to me, it came into my mind, that Christ could save from all this; he could deliver from such a weighty wrath!

Immediately upon which my soul applied to him for help; and, this was the language of my heart, Lord Jesus, I come, I come, I come to thee, I come for deliverance from this distinguished place in hell, this uncommon weight of wrath. I thought I might hope in him for deliverance, though others went to hell, whose sins were unspeakably less than mine, and the truth contained in those words, "*I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy,*" seemed sweet and wonderful. I felt confounded, and my soul was filled with blushing and shame, saying from my heart, "Righteousness belongeth unto thee, O Lord, but unto me shame and confusion of face because I have sinned" In the conclusion of my petitions when I mentioned Christ as the person, in whose name I presented myself and offering, I felt that he was the only Saviour, and ground of hope for sinners. Had it not been for him, the least sin must have damned infallibly: and it seemed wonderful, even that the least sinner, and especially such a sinner as I was, might have hope. When I came to conclude my devotions with ascriptions of praise to God, my heart dwelt upon this, and I longed that the angels might praise God. I saw that God could glorify himself by saving me, but the tribute of praise which I could offer was mean, and inconsiderable—I wanted to list out his praise in some humble place. I rose from my knees lightened and comforted: all nature put on a more pleasant aspect, and those words "*I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy*" dwelt on my heart with pleasure and delight.

should lose the future benefit of his company and instructions. But I considered him as so eminently qualified for the presidency of a college, that the prospect of the good he would do in that station, so much over balanced the benefit of his staying at Stockbridge and my personal advantage, that I thought it my duty to give my voice for his removal to Princeton. But the agreeable prospect of his usefulness, as president of the college, was soon ended: For he had been but a few weeks in that station before he was, by the advice of the trustees, inoculated with the small pox, which put an end to his life in the month of March 1758.

Upon the death of Mr. Edwards, Mrs. Edwards, in consequence of verbal directions given to her by Mr. Edwards in his life time, put all his manuscripts and his library into my hands, and care: His manuscripts to be disposed of by me, and two other ministers. And Mrs. Edwards solicited me to write the life of Mr. Edwards, to be published, with a number of sermons, to be selected from his manuscripts. I considered myself very unequal to writing his life; but as by having the possession of his manuscripts, I was under better advantage to do it, than others, I engaged to do the best I could; and if it should be approved of by a number of friendly, judicious ministers, I would consent to have it published, on condition that my name

should not be put to it. Accordingly it was published with a number of posthumous sermons, the most of which I transcribed myself from his manuscripts.

As these manuscripts were in my hands a number of years, I paid my chief attention to them, until I had read them all, which consisted of a great number of volumes, some of them large, besides sermons, of which sermons I did not read the whole. In doing this I had much pleasure and profit. My mind became more engaged in study, rising, great part of my time, at four o'clock in the morning to pursue my study, in which I took great pleasure.

In the twenty five years which I spent at Great Barrington, I had but little apparent success in the conversion of sinners, though a number were hopefully converted, and the church was considerably increased in numbers. And the town made advances and prospered in a good degree in their worldly circumstances. And it appears from what has taken place at the time of my leaving them, and since, that my labours among them were a means of preventing many vices and evils, which have since that time been apparently increasing among them. They have had no minister settled among them, except for a short time, since I left them. The church has dwindled, and come to almost

nothing, or worse. They have not prospered in their worldly concerns, but the contrary. And are far from being respectable as a people or town in the sight of those who are acquainted with them, and their circumstances.

While I lived at Great Barrington many things took place in the exercises of my own mind, and in respect to other persons and objects, which cannot now be narrated : but must be left to that day, when every work will be brought into judgment, with every secret thing. I went through many trials and discouragements, both from within myself, and from things without. My mind was often sunk in darkness and despondency, discouraged with myself; displeased with my own character and performances; and burdened with a sense of my awful depravity and great deficiencies; and often doubted whether I were a real christian. Yet I was supported by views of divine truths; and at times raised above all doubts, and to high religious enjoyments in the exercise of those affections which appeared to be truly gracious, and excluded all doubts and fears respecting my state. And I had often great enjoyment in contemplating divine truth, and in the exercises of heart which attended and were implied in these truths, independent of any determination, hope or thought that I was a christian. And the exercises and experiences of my own heart, were the ground of my preaching, in

general, and led to those passages of scripture and subjects which I chose for my public discourses.

A number of christians, though not large, who were members of the church, were a comfort to me, and appeared to be pleased and edified under my ministry. I had, from time to time, some opposers of the doctrines which I preached. But being persuaded, and *knowing* that they were the truths contained in divine revelation, this opposition, from whatever quarter, did not in the least deter or discourage me from adhering to them and vindicating them publicly and in private. And this was the occasion of my understanding them better, of enlarging my views of the extent and consistency of the truths of christianity; and more and more confirming and establishing me in the knowledge and belief of them.

When I was dismissed from Great-Barrington, I thought it not probable that I should resettle in the work of the ministry, since I could not think of settling any where, unless with a church, which were friendly to the doctrines and discipline which I believed and preached, and appeared, at least a good number of them, to be *real christians*. And it was not probable that such a church could be found, seeing religion appeared generally to be sunk to so low an ebb,

and the doctrines and discipline which I inculcated, were so much opposed and rejected.

I was then engaged in writing a reply to Mr. Mills entitled, *The true state and character of the unregenerate, stripped of all misrepresentation and disguise*. In attending to and finishing this I spent some months at home, and most of the time rode on Saturday to North Canaan, about twelve miles from my house, and preached to that people, they having no minister, and returned home on Monday. When that work was finished, and put to press at New-Haven, I set out on a journey to Boston, desiring to visit my christian friends there, of whom I had a considerable number, with whom I had a particular acquaintance, and who had shown great and special kindness to me for a number of years. Doctor Lowell being then aged and sick, unable to attend the work of the ministry, a number of the church and congregation of the *old south*, were desirous to have me introduced there. But some of the leading men in the church being opposed to it, exerted themselves in opposition to it, and took measures effectually to prevent it.

While I was in Boston, there came a man from Topsham, a town one hundred and fifty miles east of Boston, on Kennebec river; being sent to get a minister to come and preach to that people. Having been desirous for sometime to

get acquainted with that eastern country, of which I had heard much, I consented to go, and arrived there the beginning of June. I found the settlement new; the people ignorant and generally stupid in matters of religion; and no church or professors of religion in the town. The people, however, came pretty generally to hear me; and many came from the adjacent towns, there being but few ministers in these parts. They professed highly to approve of my preaching, and none appeared to oppose. When I had spent a few sabbaths there, the committee came to me, and said, the people appeared unanimous in desiring me to stay with them; they therefore desired that I would consent to have the people collected in town meeting to see if they would invite me to settle among them, in which, without doubt, they would be unanimous. I told them that they were but a young settlement, and their lands in general were uncultivated: that as I had a wife and a number of children, and was so far advanced in life, I did not believe it my duty to move my family so far, and settle among them, in my time of life, and in their present circumstances; therefore would not have them think of calling a meeting of the people, in order to invite me to settle with them: that I hoped they would find a *young man*, who might be willing to settle with them.*

* Monday June 12, 1769. Spent Saturday in fasting and prayer, had a variety of exercises, more strong than com-

I then concluded in my own mind, that it would be my duty to live with my family at Great-Barrington, and cultivate my farm for a

mon, was in tears great part of the day; so that I was obliged to shut myself up, not fit to be seen. If ever I knew what it was, to cast myself upon Christ, I did so now. Sovereign grace was all my plea, and all my hope. I had unspeakable pleasure in thinking that in me, there was a proper foundation for the *greatest* exercise and display of sovereign grace; even in my infinite, distinguished guilt, vileness and misery: this afforded opportunity for the exercise of divine power, wisdom, and goodness, in all their infinite height and latitude. That in *me*, there was a *broad bottom*, for the trial of divine grace, on which it may have full scope, as it were, and erect the greatest monument, to the praise of the glory of God's grace to all eternity! My soul seemed to rejoice and exult in this, more, unspeakably more than in my own salvation, considered as separate from this. Yea, the latter, was as nothing of no account, and not worth asking for, in comparison with the former, or aside from that.

My exercises were uncommon, and remarkable in one respect, viz. in the quick succession of light and joy, and dejection and gloom. I was sometimes lifted up, and then soon cast down, and my exercises as it were obliterated.

The chief things I proposed to seek God for to day were, first, his direction and smiles, with regard to my future circumstances, and usefulness in the world, with respect to which, I have had a variety of exercises, which would fill a volume were they all recorded.

Secondly, For my christian friends.

Thirdly, For the church of Christ, &c.

This morning awoke with the words of Christ in my mind "he that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him." I seemed to long to keep Christ's commandments, and thought the great one was to *love one another*. This led me when I was up, to read the 14th, 15th and 16th chapters of John. And oh, how full of sweet instruction are they! there is an additional, inexpressible sweetness in the bible now, which I never tasted before.

living, rather than to settle at Topsham, or any place like that; and felt reconciled to such a plan, unless I should have some better prospect of settling in the ministry.

Saturday morning July 1. Purpose to spend this day in fasting and prayer. The day is to be spent in the following manner.

1. In attending to my sins, and confessing them before God.
2. In praying for pardon and holiness.
3. That God would make the path of duty plain before me, form me for his service, and improve me in it.
4. In seeking mercies for my wife and children.
5. Praying for direction and assistance while with this people, that some good may be done here.
6. For my christian friends, and kind benefactors.
7. For the church of Christ in general and for the world of mankind. Close the day with thanksgiving.

When I first rose this morning, read the seventy first Psalm, with some exercises of heart and pleasure. Many passages, in it seemed applicable to my circumstances; and I thought I could make them the language of my own heart. The imprecations on enemies, verse, 13, 24, I could apply to invisible enemies, the devils, and wicked men, considered as enemies to me, because enemies to Christ, and so far as they are such, they may be consumed and destroyed. This is consistent with their being converted and saved.

“Their feet are swift to shed blood, but how to do good they know not.” This is the very character that I have been of, all my days. All sin of omission or commission is shedding blood, it is mischief, it is murder. In all my connections, I have been constantly guilty of omitting something which I ought to have done for their good, or doing something which tended to their hurt. I have missed ten thousand opportunities to do good, and have not seen them till they were past, through the stupidity and wickedness of my heart. If I have ever desired to do any good, it has been the effect of sovereign grace.

I have been longing to get rid of sin—the thought of living as I have, is dreadful. In this sense I groan being burdened!

While I was in this situation, in the beginning of July, I received a letter from the committee of the first congregational church in

Wednesday morning July 5. I have had a sweet hour between nine and ten. Surely if the highest enjoyments on earth were all laid at my feet, to have them to all eternity without God, I would not give this hour's enjoyment for them all: Yea I would despise them. "It is good for me, to draw near to God." How swift, and how sweetly do ideas pass the mind, when it is in any measure in a right frame! It is impossible to express all the thoughts and ideas, which have passed my mind in this hour on my knees before God! "There is none on earth that I desire *besides thee*," were words to which my soul did echo, and which I could espouse with all my heart. *Besides, thee*, that is aside from thee, or without thee, and not in union with thee. I concluded with a solemn, and I hope *heartly* dedication of myself to God, believing that he could, and in a degree of confidence that he would, do more than I am able to ask, or conceive.

Tuesday morning July 6. Rose early this morning, and O! astonishing that I may say it! have had a gracious, and most sweet visit from God. When I first attempted to bow before God, I felt myself, all at once in the presence of the all seeing, infinitely wise, good, and every way most excellent and glorious God, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working. My soul adored and loved, and rejoiced in him. My soul was drawn out in strong and sweet exercises of love and praise, in a view of what God is in himself, and as manifested in his works. My soul would praise God, let him do what he would with me. I said I will praise thee as long as I live, and bless thy name while I have a being. O, how did my heart rejoice and exult that there is *such a God!* Words cannot utter it, nor can I write a thousandth part of my exercises. It appeared something wonderfully great, and inexpressibly desirable, to be the instrument of bringing but one soul to the knowledge of this glorious God—of turning men from darkness to this marvellous light.

This morning, I have been led to view, and address God, considered in his absolute, divine perfection, and address him in and through Christ, more than is common for me. I gene-

Newport, with an invitation to come and preach to them, with a view to settle with them, if they and I could agree.

rally, when I have the greatest freedom at the throne of grace, speak directly to Christ, as if he was in a sense, the only object of worship, being God, and having all power in heaven and earth; but now it was otherwise.

I have sometimes been troubled about this matter, and feared I had no right ideas of the father, and the son, of God and Christ, as I seemed not to know how to conceive of them, and address them in my devotions. And have been hence led to ask that I might know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent; might have ideas, and conceptions of the glorious God and Saviour, agreeable, and answerable to the revelation he has made of himself. I have been more satisfied about it, this morning. I now believe that christians may have different views with respect to this, and yet all be right. Sometimes their minds may be fixed on Christ, in whom dwells all the fullness of the Godhead; and, he may be more immediately the object of their adoration and worship, addressing him more directly, in which he is considered as set up by the father, and invested with all authority, and so comprehending *all that is called God*. At other times, they may have their minds more especially fixed on the divine perfections, more absolutely considered, yet not exclusively of Christ the mediator, and so more directly address God over all blessed forever as exercising mercy through a mediator. And I believe different christians may, in a stated way, differ in this respect in their view and addresses; and so be naturally led to talk of their exercises in a little different language; some speaking more of God, others more of Christ. Our ideas are very scant at best, and we see but by parts and in a very partial manner. Hence when we view God in one attitude, if I may so express it, his other relations and attitudes are more out of sight, and less attended to. Yet when all our ideas and views, are compared together, they are perfectly uniform and consistent, however various and different they may be.

3 o'clock. Have had a sweet time in a walk in the woods. Had more hope and confidence before God, that I should dwell with him forever in his kingdom, than I ever had be-

On the 10th July I left Topsham to go to Newport, by way of Boston and Providence, and arrived at Newport on Friday, July 21, and preached my first sermon there on Lord's day July 23.*

fore. Christ appeared great and glorious in redeeming his people from all iniquity; and even in redeeming one such soul as mine. I said, "I will praise thee forever" but this tribute appeared nothing. Then I said, "let all the angels praise thee for thy wonderful works to me." But this also appeared to be little, which led me to say, glorify thyself.

* Saturday September 30. Have been reading the 25th Psalm, with application to myself, have particularly attended to the 7th verse, where the Psalmist desires that God would give what he asks for, *for his goodness sake*, i. e. for the sake of the display of his goodness, as there must be a great and wonderful exercise and display of it in shewing mercy to him, who was so sinful, unworthy and undeserving. This has been often my only refuge and plea. God shews mercy, *for his goodness sake*. This is a reason then why he should shew mercy to me, for his own goodness, cannot be more displayed and honored than in his being good to me. Blessed be God for this plea. I can now say, "pardon mine iniquity *for it is great*," verse 11.

November 10. Had a pleasant season this morning soon after I rose. It began with desires after the holy spirit. I saw this was all I wanted, all I could ask for: and pleaded the promise, "Ask, and ye shall receive." These words of Christ were on my mind, he that forsaketh house, or lands, &c. &c. I thought I had a heart to do this, and blessed Christ that he had given such a heart, as the greatest possible gift, infinitely greater than to have the whole world bestowed on me. I know I ought to be willing to suffer and die in the cause of truth, Oh that Christ would give me such a heart.

January 6, 1770. I have been walking in a rope walk, by myself. There I dedicated myself to Jesus Christ, with strength of heart and with unspeakable joy. I felt it to be an amazing privilege that I might be devoted to him, and that he would accept such an offering, I felt that I was under

I had not been at Newport more than five or six weeks before the church and congregation gave me a call to come and settle among them in the work of the ministry. I took the matter into consideration, and went home to my family; and after a few weeks returned with a determina-

infinite obligations to this, and that the obligation is every way unbounded and that there is a peculiar happiness in being thus obliged to him.

I have promised that by his grace I never will recall this dedication of myself to him, praying him to subdue every thing in my heart that opposes this consecration, and that he would cause it to rise higher and higher continually.

Saturday, near sun set, January 13. Have had some sense of God's mercies to day, and some disposition to praise him for his wonderful goodness. I have had a degree of confidence that I am devoted to God. I cast myself, and all my concerns, the concerns of the church, and the world on him, with some degree of sensible resignation and cheerfulness. Have had more strong desires than ever for the good of the congregation I am preaching to; and have been enabled to plead for it with God: My mouth has been filled with arguments and have had strong desires to be the instrument of building of it up.

Thursday evening January 18. Have begun to write remarks upon Mr. Hart, and think it my duty to prosecute it as fast as I can, supposing I am called to it by God. O that God would guide my heart, and my pen, through the whole.

Lord's day, January 21. Preached from Heb. ii. 3. How shall we escape. Had freedom of speech, and now feel calm and easy in my mind, as having in some measure declared the truth clearly and plainly, and recommended myself to men's consciences in the sight of God. I pray God to give his blessing to what has been said, may it be the means of salvation to some poor soul.

Saturday January 27. I seemed to have some sense, to day, of God's goodness to me, it surpasses all expression— all thought Oh! how reasonable, how comely is praise! Let me spend an eternity in this!

tion to comply with their invitation, as I found here a number who appeared to be excellent christians, and the best regulated church that I had seen. But when I returned the committee came to me, and said that in my absence a number in the congregation had appeared dissatisfied with my doctrines, and pains had been taken to promote prejudices against me. They therefore

Monday morning 4 o'clock. Have been worried about my preaching yesterday. I believe it was the truth, but perhaps I had better not have preached it then, but I suspect the devil has a hand in my uneasiness, and perplexity. Oh that Christ would deliver me from this roaring lion, and baffle and confound him! I know he will, and that however imprudent I am, and whatever advantage the devil gets by it at present, it shall all turn against him at last, and he shall be most effectually disappointed and confounded. This is some comfort to me, I think; but it is unspeakably dreadful to me, to think of giving him advantage by my imprudence and sin. O Lord, in thy righteousness deliver me from this subtle, powerful, cruel, unjust, injurious foe! He has no right to seek my ruin or the ruin of others. So far as I am against him and desire to oppose him, and sincerely cry to thee for deliverance, and his overthrow, I am in a *righteous cause*, O deliver me in thy righteousness. Let him be blasted forever!

Saturday evening February 10. Have had freedom, in thought, and prayer—have been enabled to cast all my cares and burdens on God, as an infinitely full fountain, and the portion which my soul desires. I have sometimes seemed to have nothing to pray for; every thing is right, and just as I should desire to have it be. So long as Christ reigns and has every thing in his hands, I seem to have nothing to do, but praise.

It seems to me I have some higher sense of what is meant by *living by faith on the son of God*, than I used to have. It is to make Christ ALL, to seek him for *every thing*, and live entirely on his expence and charges, having nothing of our own but emptiness and poverty.

wished that I would not give any answer to their call at present, but desired me to continue to preach with them, by which they hoped the prejudices against me which had taken place would subside. I complied with their desire, and continued to preach to them till some time in March. My friends, and the committee then thought it was best to call the church and congregation together, to see if they would renew the call they had given me to settle with them, supposing they would be so unanimous that I should consent to stay. But when the leaders among those who were dissatisfied were informed of this proceeding, they exerted themselves to get people to subscribe in opposition to my settling among them; and when the congregation met, it appeared that there were more subscribers against me, than there were for me. And the committee were desired to inform me of the state of the case.* This decided the affair which had

* Saturday, March 3. I think I have given up every point but this viz. that the path of duty may be made plain. If I have a call to leave Newport, and shall see it to be so, I think I can cheerfully go forth not knowing whether I am to go. And I have a pleasing hope and confidence that the way will be made plain, why should I not trust in that God for this, who has hitherto led me in a *plain path* especially ever since I have had a heart to seek this in a more particular manner, making it my great petition, not caring so much what God called me to, if his call might be made clear and plain.

God's goodness has been increasing upon me continually, and I will hope in him for I shall yet praise him. I will now praise him for all his wonderful goodness to me, which is in-

been long in suspense, and the way was clear for my leaving Newport ; and I felt a satisfaction that the path of duty was made so clear ; and that my friends who had been so desirous that I should settle with them, would have no objection, but justify me in leaving them. And I had a degree of pleasure, in the thought of re-

deed beyond all account. God has forgiven me from my youth unto this day, and why may I not trust in him now ? By his grace I will ; on him I cast myself, on him I rely for pardoning, and upholding mercy.

Lord's day evening, March 4. Had some uncommon exercises, this morning. I longed to be improved in the work of the ministry, that Christ would be with me and make me a blessing. I offered myself, desiring that he would send me, since he had so much work to do in the world, and since he must employ unworthy, guilty sinners. I offered myself, as such an one : and since he glorified himself in improving such, the more, unworthy and vile, the more he would be glorified. I therefore made this an argument that I might be improved, as I was the most guilty and vile, that could be found.

March 7. Feel calm, resigned, and in some degree thankful. Oh ! what consolation is it that God reigns, and will take the best care of his own honor and interest ! And what an infinite mercy, that I may hope, and be confident, that *this God*, is my God and Redeemer.

March 19. This day, I had news brought me that three men who had been most steady in opposing me, declared last evening, that they were sorry they had opposed me, and they were now desirous that I would stay and settle with them. They were brought to this, by my farewell sermon. It is said this sermon has had greater effect than all my preaching before. Some who have thought it not best for me to stay, now appear zealous for my staying. This is all wonderful. I desire to stand still and see the hand, the salvation of God ! How greatly are my obligations increased to trust in God, to live to him, and follow him in the dark ! what matter for praise and gratitude.

turning home to my family, and living a private life on my farm. I therefore gave my answer to the people on the next sabbath, and preached my farewell sermon, expecting to go to my family that week. The congregation appeared attentive and solemn, and numbers were observed to weep.*

The next morning it was reported, where I lodged, that there appeared to be a revolution in the congregation: That several of the leaders in the opposition to me appeared to repent of what they had done, and said that their consciences accused them so severely of their wickedness in what they had done, that they had little or no sleep during the night; and were now determined to do all they could to prevent my leav-

* March 21. My mind has been full of comfort and joy this morning. Have had unspeakably sweet exercises, more than can be mentioned. The success of my preaching, last sabbath, is an instance of God's goodness, beyond any thing of the kind I ever experienced before! The walls of Jericho are fallen down by the blowing of ram's horns.

Friday March 23. The amazing instance of last sabbath, dwells on my mind, though I fear it will not be improved by me as it ought. When the walls of Jericho fell flat before the people of Israel an accursed thing was soon found in the camp. All was not dedicated to the Lord, and he was displeased. How justly displeased may he be, if this remarkable interposition of divine providence should not be all consecrated to his praise, and honor, Oh Lord, keep me back from coveting any thing of the spoils of this victory to myself, to be improved in the gratification of my pride and worldliness—This I am in the utmost danger of, and shall do worse than Achan did, unless the Lord hold me back. O may all be consecrated to thy glory.

ing them. And accordingly they went to those whom they had influenced to subscribe against my staying, to persuade them to retract. And that evening two or three of those who had been at the head of the opposition to me, came to me, and confessed they had opposed my settling in the congregation, and influenced as many as they could against me. But now were convinced they had done wrong, and had taken pains to undo what they had done, and persuade those whom they had influenced to appear against my settling among them, to alter their sentiments and conduct; that they now sincerely desired that I would stay and be their minister, &c. And I was at the same time informed that a number of the congregation, who had been in a great degree indifferent with regard to my staying or going away, now appeared to be aroused and engaged in favor of my staying, and said they would do all in their power to prevent my leaving them.

The next day the committee of the congregation applied to me, and said that it appeared that those who had been in opposition to my settlement among them, had retracted, and were now desirous that I would stay with them; at least, this was true of the most of them: And they believed, if the church and congregation were now to meet, they would be unanimous, or nearly so in renewing their former invitation

to me to settle with them in the ministry. They therefore desired me to stay till the church and congregation could be called together, and renew their call, if they should appear, when met, disposed to do it. I consented to this, and in the beginning of the next week the church and congregation met, and renewed their invitation to me to settle in the ministry with them. In this they were almost unanimous : but two or three of the congregation, dissented, who had little or no influence in the congregation. And two or three of the church, chose to be neuters, and vote neither for, nor against it.

Upon this I consented to settle with them ; and the committee of the church, agreed with me that the instalment should be on the eleventh day of April ; and to send to five churches to assist in the transaction. Which, accordingly, took place on April 11, 1770.

This event appeared to give satisfaction to all. And it was a time of peculiar gratitude and joy to my christian friends, of whom there was a considerable number, who had steadily adhered to me, from my first acquaintance with them. And their pious affections, gratitude and joy were greatly heightened, by the dark and trying scene which preceded, in my being apparently rejected by the congregation, and consequently determined to leave them ; and the remarkable

manner in which a revolution took place in favor of my staying, in which the hand of God was so conspicuous. And it was a peculiar satisfaction to me, that God had in such a manner opened the way for my settling here, and made the way of duty so plain ; and that such a number of very dear and excellent christian friends were hereby so greatly gratified. And I considered myself to be under new and greater obligations to devote myself to the service of Jesus Christ, and to faithfulness to him, and the church and congregation to whom I now stood related as their pastor and minister. And now, with shame I reflect upon my great deficiency. I said I would be wise ; but it has been far from me ! O Lord, enter not into judgment with me ; for I cannot stand, or answer. I fly to pardoning mercy, through the atonement of Christ, as my only refuge.

After I was thus settled, a considerable number were added to the church, which consisted, I think, of above one hundred members, male and female. I preached a lecture every Thursday evening, which was well attended. I invited the young people to meet at my house, the males on one week and the females on the next ; and so to continue to meet every week alternately, to have questions proposed to them, which they were to answer, &c. Above forty young men subscribed to an engagement to attend those

meetings: and more than seventy young women. After those meetings were attended a considerable time, I proposed that instead of these, which began to decline, I would attend a lecture every sabbath evening at 6 o'clock in the meeting house, in which I would explain to the young people the shorter catechism, composed by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster. The young people to sit by themselves in the body of the meeting house below; and elder people who were disposed to come, to sit in the gallery, and the pews round the sides of the house below. These lectures were crowded; the congregation being larger than at the meetings in the former part of the day, as numbers attended them from other congregations in town. And the young people appeared attentive, gave constant attendance, and behaved decently.

When I had gone through the catechism in this way, I undertook to give a *history of the bible*, in a course of lectures, endeavouring to join entertainment with instruction, and religious, profitable reflections, particularly applicable to young persons. These lectures were continued, and well attended till they were broken up by the war between Britain and America.

My continuance in peace and quietness in this situation and business, was not more than four

years ; for by that time the British war came on, and it was thought best to send my family away to live on my farm at Great Barrington. I continued, however, in Newport, till the British took possession of it in the latter end of the year 1776, when I left the town, and retired to my family, where I had been a few months before, and was inoculated, with my family for the small pox, through which we were carried favourably.

I spent great part of the summer of 1777 at Newburyport, preaching to the congregation, which was then, I believe, the largest in America, being destitute by the then late death of Mr. Parsons. The next winter I spent at Canterbury in Connecticut, preaching to a destitute congregation there. And early in the spring I went to Stamford, to a destitute congregation, to which I preached during the summer of 1778. And in the fall of that year I left the old town of Stamford, and preached to a parish in the same town, then called Woodpecker-Ridge, now called North Stamford. Here I had my wife and one daughter with me, and continued here through the winter and summer of 1779, and the winter of 1780. In the spring of that year my wife and daughter went to Great Barrington and I went to Newport, the British having left it the fall before.

My church and congregation were greatly diminished. Some had died, while the British were here, and many had removed into the country, who had not yet returned, and numbers were so settled in the country, that they were not likely to return soon, if ever. And those who remained in town were so reduced in their worldly circumstances, and dejection of their minds, by living so long under the tyranny of the British, that, excepting a very few, they had not courage enough to think or do much to preserve the congregation from coming to nothing, by supporting the preaching of the gospel. And it was a particular discouragement that the meeting house was so damaged, by being made a barrack for soldiers, that we could not meet in it. The bell was taken away by the British, when they left the town; and the pulpit and most of the inside work was demolished or taken away. And the few who were here had not courage or ability to repair it. I continued more than a year among them, while in this situation, having no support, but what was given by a few generous friends: the congregation doing nothing, as a congregation, not having courage to attempt to have so much as a public contribution for a considerable time.

Having continued in this situation above a year, I thought it was not my duty, or even right to stay with them any longer, unless they

thought themselves able, and were willing to support me and my family : especially as I had a pressing invitation from the church and people at Middleborough to settle with them, where I and my family might be comfortably supported. I let the church and congregation know this, and told them that I was willing and desirous to spend my life with them, if I could live among them with my family. But if this could not be, I should think it my duty to leave them, and accept of the invitation I had elsewhere ; or return home, and live on my farm. Upon this they had a meeting to see what could be done : at which meeting the people appeared so much concerned and engaged in the matter, and so desirous to have me stay with them, and made a subscription to that end so much more than was expected, that they sent to me their desire that I would stay with them, and send for my wife and family ; as they hoped to be able to support us comfortably.

I then concluded to stay at Newport ; and my wife and one daughter came to live with me, as the rest of my children were otherwise settled. There was no particular sum mentioned which they would give ; and thus I have lived ever since, receiving what has been given by a weekly contribution, and donations which particular friends have made. I have taken care not to run in debt for the necessaries of life ; though fre-

quently if a dollar extraordinary had been called for, it would have rendered me a bankrupt. I have endeavoured to live as cheap and low as I could, and be comfortable, and answer the ends of living in my station and business; and have experienced, through a course of years remarkable interpositions in divine providence, by which I have been supplied with the necessaries of life in ways unthought of; and have been preserved from suffering, for want of food or raiment, whether I received less or more. When more than common has been given, calls for living have been equally greater; and when I have received but little, there has been a less demand for necessaries to support the family, and less has been as sufficient as more. This has made me often think of what is said of the children of Israel, with respect to the manna on which they lived. "He that gathered much, had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack." I have been saved from anxiety about living: and have had a thousand times less care and trouble about the world, than if I had a great abundance, and been in high life, attended with servants, equipage, much company, entertainments and high living. Being thus freed from worldly care and anxiety, endeavouring to cast my care on God, with respect to living, not seeking *great things* in the world; and being in a great measure unconnected with the great and rich in the world, and gay, unprofita-

ble company, I have had more time to attend to my studies, in which, and in a retired life, I have taken the greatest pleasure. And particularly have had leisure to write my system of divinity ; which I hope will not prove useless.

The church and congregation have been enabled, by divine providence, in some good measure to repair the meeting house ; and do yet subsist. But they are so diminished by deaths and removals ; that the appearance now is, that when death shall remove me from them, which may be expected to be soon, they will be dissolved as a church and congregation, unless there should be an unexpected revolution in their dispositions or circumstances. But this I would leave with him, who knows what to do with me, with them, and with all things else.

As to my domestic affairs. I have had eight children : Five sons and three daughters, all which lived to grow up ; and all of them have been married, except my youngest son, who died in Maryland on the 26th February 1788, in the twenty fifth year of his age. My three daughters were married, and are now dead. The oldest left two sons. The second left a daughter, who now lives with me. The third left an infant son, who now lives with his father's parents in Vermont. My two oldest daughters were professors of religion, and were hope-

fully real christians. The youngest died in hope that she was a christian, and her appearance and conversation were such in her last sickness, that her friends who were with her and heard her converse, had hope for her, that she made a happy end. I have four sons yet living. One of them, the oldest lives in Maryland, near Baltimore. Another, the third lives in the western part of Virginia. I attempted to give him a public education, and he was a member of the college at Princeton two years or more; but want of health prevented his continuing there till he had a degree. My other two sons live at Great Barrington.

My wife was attended with a scrofulous, slow-consumption for a great part of the last twenty years of her life; and a number of times appeared to be almost gone, and then would revive again and be better for a time. She indured great distress of body, almost constantly for years. In May, 1793, I went to Great Barrington with her, by water as far as Hudson, hoping the journey, and living with her children in the country might be for her health and comfort. She bore her journey better than was feared, and appeared better when she arrived there, than when she set out; and continued better great part of the summer. But in the end of July and in August, she grew worse; and died on the last day of August 1793, in the sixty eighth year of her age.

She was a professor of religion, and I hope a real christian. In the latter part of her life, under her bodily disorders, which were very distressing, especially at times, she appeared to exercise christian patience and resignation ; and to have a stedfast belief of the great truths of christianity, and a sense of their weight and importance.

After the death of my wife, I was left alone at Newport, as to relatives, not having the most distant relation, within many miles of that place.

On the 14th September 1794, I was married to Miss Elizabeth West, who was sixteen or seventeen years younger than myself. She was born and educated in Boston ; but had lived in Newport a number of years. I have had a particular acquaintance with her for more than thirty years, whom I esteemed as a christian of uncommon discernment with respect to the doctrines of christianity ; and most sincerely devoted to the service of Christ. In our union in this nearest relation, we have had the appro- /
bation of our christian friends here and elsewhere, who have appeared to be pleased and gratified by it. Which has been an addition to our happiness in this relation. I have thought myself greatly favoured, and peculiarly happy in finding such a wife, who has been willing to come into this relation with me ; and esteem it

as one of the greatest favours of my life to have such a companion in my advanced years, in whose prudence, good family economy, friendship, and benevolent care I can confide ; and who is to me the first object among creatures, of the love of esteem, benevolence, complacency and gratitude.

My bodily constitution, I believe, has been much better, than most of those who live a sedentary life. In the former part of my life, indeed, from the twenty first to the thirty-fifth or fortieth year of my age, my constitution was rather slender and infirm ; but not so as to prevent my attending to business and my study, as much or more than is common among ministers. Since that time of life my constitution has been better, and I have enjoyed generally a good state of bodily health ; and have been able to study fourteen and frequently eighteen hours in a day, generally rising at 4 o'clock in the morning, or between four and five ; especially in the winter season. I have had several fits of sickness, in which I have been brought very low, and have been thought by my friends to be near death. But these ill turns have not broken my constitution, but have appeared to be the means of my better health, as this has generally been the consequence ; and I now enjoy more bodily ease, health and strength, than is common to men of my age. This, and every thing relating to my

life, even the most minute circumstance, I know is ordered by God, to answer some wise and good end: And when he shall have no more to do for and by me in this world, he will take me out of it. How soon, and in what way this will be I know not. Nor have I any reason to be in the least anxious about it. May I wisely improve the gifts of heaven, and life and health, while I enjoy them, and be always ready to quit this life, whenever I shall be called to do it!

Of my personal religion, I have given some account already. I have never in the course of my life, since I first entertained a hope that I had been brought to the knowledge of the truth, given up my hope, and come to a settled conclusion that I had no grace; but my doubts have frequently rose very high. Many times my exercises have been such, as for a time to exclude all doubts. But I have been constantly conscious that I have always fallen unspeakably below what I ought to be, and what I hoped I should be. My strongest religious exercises, and highest enjoyments have taken place in my retirement and secret devotions; and in my public performances, praying and preaching have generally been very low; which I have sometimes suspected was an argument that my religion is not genuine. I know it is an argument against me, that I am very sinfully defective in my social and public religion! I have been frequently carried out in

secret in views of divine truth, and exercises, even to an ecstasy, while tears have flowed abundantly, with groanings and desires truly unutterable. My religious emotions and exercises of soul in the view of the truths respecting God, and the Saviour, the way of salvation, my own evil character, &c. have been unspeakably more lively and strong, than any emotions and exercises I have ever experienced, respecting any worldly, temporal objects. I have loved retirement, and have never been comfortable when deprived of it; and have taken more pleasure *alone*, than in any company: And have often chosen to ride alone, when on a journey, rather than in the best company. I have for a long course of years, even from my first entering on the work of the ministry, spent the last day of the week in retirement, and in fasting and prayer, unless interrupted by something extraordinary; and have found great advantage by it. This I have practiced not as a burden and task, but as a privilege. I have felt and known myself to be a low and shameful christian, if I were one; and have generally reflected on myself, character and conduct, as a christian and minister of the gospel, with a *painful shame* and self condemnation, of which none can have conception but those who have felt the same; knowing that in many things I offend, and in *every thing* have come unspeakably short of what I ought to do and be, considering my advantages,

mercies and obligations. My life and character and all my exercises are stained with such an awful degree of moral depravity and pollution, that I feel myself infinitely far from any righteousness or moral goodness that can recommend me to the favour of God; and if I am dealt with according to my moral character and desert, I must be cast off by God, and made miserable forever. I have no refuge but the righteousness, the infinite merit and worthiness of Christ. In *him* I hope; to him I come for pardon, justification and redemption from all iniquity, while I am willing to be considered as infinitely unworthy and ill deserving, even the greatest sinner that is, or ever was on earth: And know that if I am saved, it will be wholly owing to mere, infinite, sovereign grace; to eternal, electing love; for which I cannot give or conceive any reason but that which was given by the Son of God, "even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." I am truly ashamed of myself, that I have lived so long, and have made so little advances in mental religious attainments; and am, at the same time, conscious that I see but very little of my shameful depravity which has actually taken place, and now exists, and as it is viewed by the omniscient Saviour; and therefore my confessions, shame and humiliation, in his sight are inconsiderable and nothing, compared with my real shameful depravity and odiousness. And that petition well becomes me,

“ God, be merciful to me a sinner !” And how happy are they who can and do understandingly heartily and constantly make it ! I have kept a journal at some seasons of my life, in which some of my religious exercises are recorded more particularly than they are here described.

My preaching has always appeared to me as poor, low and miserable, compared with what it ought to be ; and frequently a sense of my deficiencies in this has been very painful and discouraging ; and I have felt often as if I must leave off, and never attempt any more ; and commonly, if not always, a prospect of preaching and when I have been entering upon it, has brought a peculiar burden on my mind. And many times, when I have been preaching, it has left a painful consciousness that I have come unspeakably short of what ought to be. And I have never wondered that my preaching has been attended with so little apparent good effect, since it has been so deficient every way. But few persons have appeared to have been awakened and converted by means of my preaching. The most apparent good it has ever been the means of doing is the instruction, quickening and comfort of christians. Many of this character, and especially those who have appeared most eminent in discerning and christian experience, have highly approved of my preaching, which has been a great support and encouragement to me ;

though I have been often disposed to attribute their satisfaction and approbation to their high relish for the truth, however poor and defective the delivery and exhibition of it may be. It has often given me pleasure to look forward to the millennium, and consider what excellent preaching will then take place; when the ministers of the gospel shall be full of light and holy zeal, and exhibit the important, amiable truths of christianity, in their true connection, force and beauty: and their hearers full of sensibility and discerning, and in the exercise of a high relish for these, as the most exquisitely sweet, and nourishing food for their minds, will give a most pleasing and solemn attention, while they are partaking of the highest and most delicious entertainment. How low, mean and unentertaining is the best preaching we now have; and how low the attention and enjoyment of the hearers, compared with that, of which we now have but a faint and very imperfect idea!

For forty years or more, since I entered on the work of the ministry, I have made it my practice to read a chapter in the bible, one in the forenoon, and the other in the afternoon; and to say something on the chapter by way of explanation, and improvement, in which I have not confined myself, as to the time I should spend upon it, but have said more or less, as I thought would be most instructive and edifying. In or-

der to do this in the best manner I could, I have attended to the chapters to be read, before the sabbath, and consulted those expositors which were within my reach ; which has generally cost me as much time and pains, as the studying of my sermons. And I have thought this was as profitable part of the public exercises, as preaching, which has not been neglected by thus reading and expounding. And I have had satisfactory evidence that the hearers in general have been pleased with, and thought themselves most edified by this practice. And I have for some years past neglected to preach a sermon, in the common way, in the forenoon, and, instead of it, have expounded and improved the chapter which comes in course in the new testament. And this, so far as I can learn, has been as acceptable to the congregation in general, as preaching from one particular text, if not more so.

I have not been confined to my notes in preaching, except for a short time, when I first began ; and have not generally written my sermons in full length ; but only the heads of them, and some short hints to suggest ideas, which were to be mentioned under the general heads. I do not, however, recommend this as the best method. I think it would be best, in general, to write all the sermon, and commit it to memory, with an allowance to deviate in some instances from what has been written, and to add to it, what may

be suggested to the mind in the delivery. If this practice be diligently followed for a time, the preacher, it is expected, will be able not only to preach without notes, but his mind will be so furnished with the knowledge of divinity that he will be able to preach without writing his sermons.

I have not written the sermons which I have preached for some years past. I have written in this time more on the various subjects of divinity, than in former years; but not in the form of sermons. And I suppose that a minister cannot improve his mind in the best manner, and make proper advances in the knowledge of divinity, unless he uses himself to write on divine subjects.

I am sensible that I was greatly deficient and negligent in the former part of my life in my attention to language and taking pains to obtain a good delivery, which occasioned a very bad and disagreeable delivery, and rendered me not a good, but a bad speaker; especially in the former part of my ministry; though since for above thirty years I have made some improvement in my delivery, by paying more attention to it, and to language, by which I have been in a great measure cured of some of my bad habits, contracted through inattention, and the want of a friend to point them out to me, and admonish

me. When I first began to preach, my mind was inquiring after truth; and this pleased and satisfied me where ever I could find it, without attending much to the manner or the language by which it was conveyed to my mind. And I took it for granted that this was the case with others. This led me to enquire after *truth* and in my sermons to convey it to others, without attending properly to the manner and the language in which it was communicated. So that while, I trust, I made some proficiency in the knowledge of the truth, I was careless as to the manner of communicating it, and contracted these bad habits, with respect to this, which it was not easy, if possible, to get wholly rid of, when I became sensible of my mistake, and was convinced of the importance of studying good language and a proper delivery.

If I have been the mean of doing any good, and of promoting the true interest of the church, or kingdom of Christ; by detecting error and displaying and vindicating the truth, I believe it has been principally by my writings and publications, which involved me, for a number of years, in disputes, as there were several ministers who wrote against what I had advanced in some of my publications, whom I answered; and I believe truth has gained great advantage hereby.

In the year 1759 I published three sermons

from Romans iii. 5, 6, 7, 8. entitled "Sin, through divine interposition, an advantage to the universe, and yet this no excuse for sin or encouragement to it." This title was so shocking to many, that they would read no farther. And many who read the sermons, were far from falling in with the sentiment advanced. But few had studied the point and it was a new doctrine to many. Yet no one undertook publicly to confute it. And many who read the sermons were convinced of the truth exhibited in them; and thought the reasoning from scripture to be unanswerable, and the sentiments which were advanced to be important and useful. And this conviction has been spreading from that time, to this, and the most who are serious and attentive, whether ministers or others, approve of this publication, so far as I can judge. And light on this subject has been, and still is increasing. These sermons had a second edition in Boston, in the year 1773. And about the same time another edition of them was printed in Edinburgh, Scotland.

In the year 1765, I published a book of one hundred and forty-five pages, octavo, the title of which was, "An inquiry concerning the promises of the gospel: Whether any of them are made to the exercises and doings of persons in an unregenerate state. Containing remarks on two sermons, published by Doctor Mayhew

of Boston." In these sermons Doctor Mayhew attempted to prove that there are promises to the doings of the unregenerate. In the tenth and last section of this book I attempted to shew what is the design and end of the use of means, with respect to the unregenerate, in order to their salvation ; where I observed, that the end was not to render the unregenerate better or less sinful while they continued unregenerate : For persons while they continued to reject the gospel, which all the unregenerate did, under all the means used with them, and with all the light and conviction they might have, did not become less sinners, but greater and more guilty whatever external reformation might take place. Though this truth had been at least implicitly asserted in the writings of many calvinists, and in their preaching, yet it had not been so explicitly and particularly asserted and explained by calvinistic writers and preachers in general ; and many, in contradiction to what they at other times said, and to true calvinism, said things which implied the contrary, and represented the convinced and externally reformed sinner, though unregenerate, and continuing to reject the gospel, as a much less sinner, and less guilty than the unawakened, secure sinner. Therefore, though Doctor Mayhew, who was not a calvinist, made no reply to my remarks on his sermons, yet many professed calvinists thought the sentiment I had advanced was contrary to the truth,

and of a very bad tendency. Among the rest, Mr. Mills of Ripton in Connecticut was greatly alarmed; and thought the doctrine I had published was new and strange, contrary to the bible, and tended to great mischief. He therefore thought it his duty to oppose, and attempt to confute me, and published a book of one hundred and twenty-four pages against me, in the year 1767.

In 1768, a sermon which I preached in the old south meeting-house in Boston was published at the desire of a number of the hearers. The title of it is, "The importance and necessity of christians considering Jesus Christ in the extent of his high and glorious character." The text Hebrews iii. 1. It was composed with a design to preach it in Boston, as I expected soon to go there, under a conviction that the doctrine of the divinity of Christ was much neglected, if not disbelieved by a number of the ministers in Boston

In the same year I published two sermons, one from Romans vii. 7. the other from John i. 13. containing sixty-five pages in a small comprehensive type. A second edition of these sermons was printed in 1793.

In the year 1769 I published my answer to Mr. Mills of one hundred eighty four pages, octavo, on a small comprehensive type. The following

was the title of it. "The true state and character of the unregenerate, stripped of all misrepresentation and disguise." I believe this book, with what was afterwards published on the same subject, was the means of spreading and giving much light and conviction, with respect to the real character and doings of the unregenerate; and has in a great measure put a stop to exhorting the unregenerate to do duty in order to obtain regeneration, which was very common among preachers before that time. Some of my friends thought I treated Mr. Mills with too much severity, in taking pains to show how many self-contradictions were to be found in his writings, and to discover his weakness, &c. since I, as well as others, believed he was a good man, and had done much good, and the opposition he had made to me was more owing to his weakness and his old age, and his speculative error, than to his opposition of heart to the truth. And I believe there is something of this kind, which ought, all things considered, to be left out, or otherwise expressed; though I had no perception of it in the time of it; but thought I was conscientiously careful to leave out all personal reflections and every thing which was not necessary in the best manner to expose error and vindicate the truth. But how deceitful is the heart! Who can understand his errors!

In the latter end of the year 1769, or beginning

of 1770, Mr. William Hart of Saybrook published a dialogue, under the following title, "Brief remarks on a number of false positions, and dangerous errors, which are spreading in the country; collected out of sundry discourses lately published, wrote by Doctor Whitaker and Mr. Hopkins." And soon after there was a small pamphlet published, which was doubtless written by the same Mr. Hart, which was written in a sarcastical way, without argument or reason, in which the doctrines I, and others who agreed with me, had published were misrepresented; attempting to set them in a ridiculous light. And with a particular design, as it appeared, to disgrace me before the public, he called them *Hopkintonian* doctrines. This is the original of this epithet. And since that time all who embrace the calvinistic doctrines which were published by President Edwards, Doctor Bellamy, Doctor West of Stockbridge, and myself, have been called *Hopkintonians*, or *Hopkinsians*. Thus I am become the head of a denomination, who have since greatly increased, and in which thousands are included, and a large number of ministers, who, I believe are the most sound, consistent and thorough calvinists; and who in general sustain as good a character, as to their morality, preaching and personal religion, as any set of clergymen whatever: and are most popular where there appears to be most attention to religion: And, at the same time, are most

hated, opposed and spoken against, by arminians, deists, and persons who appear to have no religion. And I believe, though this denomination or name originated from no such design, that it has proved an advantage to truth and true religion, as it has given opportunity and been the occasion of collecting those who embrace the scheme of christianity exhibited in the forementioned publications and ranking them under one standard. It has excited the attention and promoted enquiry into the principles and doctrines which are embraced and held by those of this denomination, by which light and conviction have been spread and propagated.

These writings of Mr. Hart's were published, while I was at Newport, preaching on probation. Pains were taken to send and spread them there, by those who were not friendly to my sentiments, and consequently not friendly to me, and to my settling in the first congregational church in Newport; with a view, no doubt, to prejudice the people of that church and congregation against me. And it had this effect, in some measure for a time; but was soon counteracted and lost the influence designed; and probably had a contrary effect in the issue.

This occasioned my writing remarks on those publications; especially the dialogue, with the following title. "Animadversions on Mr.

Hart's late dialogue, in a letter to a friend." This was published in the spring of 1770, containing only thirty one pages. In which I did not attempt particularly to vindicate the doctrines I had published; but rather to show the unfairness and disingenuity of Mr. Hart, and his falsehoods, and self-contradictions, in what he had written.

Mr. Mills did not make any reply to my answer to him. But as I had asserted in that answer, that unregenerate sinners do not do any duty, Mr. Hemmenway, (now Doctor) having before published eight sermons to establish the contrary, wrote a book of one hundred twenty seven pages, octavo, against me and my position, and published it in the year 1772. The year before, the above mentioned Mr. Hart, wrote a pamphlet against President Edwards' Dissertation on the nature of true virtue, in which he repeatedly mentioned my name and writings with disapprobation. And about the same time, Mr. Moses Mather (now Doctor) published a piece in which he condemned sentiments found in President Edwards', Doctor Bellamy's and my writings.

As I was sensible the difference between me and these authors originated in our different ideas of the nature of true holiness, in 1773 I published a book of two hundred twenty pages, octavo, containing, "An inquiry into the nature

of true holiness; with an appendix," in which I answered the publications above mentioned. That on the nature of true holiness had a second edition of one thousand five hundred copies, in the year 1791. Mr. Hart and Doctor Mather wrote no more. But Doctor Hemmenway published remarks on my answer to him, in 1774, containing one hundred sixty six pages, octavo. But as little or nothing was in this added to what was contained in his first book, and it contained personal reflections, and too much heat and haughtiness; all which he confessed to me afterwards in a personal interview, I did not think it worth while to take any public notice of it. And I believe it was not much read, and had but little influence on the minds of any.

In the year 1776 I published, "A dialogue concerning the slavery of the Africans; shewing it to be the duty and interest of the American states to emancipate all their African slaves." Dedicated to the honorable continental congress. To which I did not set my name. It was reprinted by the Abolition Society in New York in 1785, to which is prefixed the institution of that Society. To this edition I added an appendix.

In the year 1783 I published "An enquiry concerning the future state of those who die in their sins." In which I attempted to show from

scripture that the punishment of such will be without end; to give the reason of it and answer objections. It contains near four hundred pages, octavo. I published that book at that time, because the doctrine of universal salvation, was preached and propagated by a number, and began to spread in the country.

In the year 1793 was published my "System of doctrines contained in divine revelation, explained and defended, shewing their consistence and connection with each other. To which is added, a treatise on the Millennium," in two large octavo volumes. The whole containing one thousand two hundred forty four pages. Sold to subscribers at three dollars a set. There was a large subscription for this work of above one thousand two hundred. I sold the copy right to the printers for nine hundred dollars, which has been a help to me, in the low, deranged state of my church and congregation; without which I know not how I should have subsisted. I had no expectation of getting a penny by the publication, when I began, and while I was preparing it for the press, nor had the least view or thought of it. I was about ten years composing and preparing it for the press. It has been a laborious work to me, which I consider as the greatest public service that I have ever done. It has met with more general and better acceptance by far, than

I expected, both in America and Europe ; and no one has undertaken to answer it ; though some cursory remarks have been made upon some parts of it, by way of objection ; which, I believe, will not have much, if any influence to prevent the credit and usefulness of it.

I have lately been writing the life of Miss Susannah Anthony, who died in the year 1791, consisting chiefly in extracts from her writings. It is gone to press, and I expect will be printed in a few months. She was an eminent and extraordinary christian. And I think it a great favor to have the particular acquaintance I have had with her ; and to have enjoyed her friendship and prayers for a number of years. I have pleasure in the prospect of promoting her usefulness, after her death, and mine, by publishing her life, and a small part of her writings. It now appears to me most probable that this is the last publication I shall be concerned in ; except some short essays which I may prepare for the Theological Magazine, which is now printed once in two months, by Mr. Davis in New-York.

About forty years ago there were but few, perhaps not more than four or five who espoused the sentiments, which since have been called *Edwardean*, and *new divinity*, and since, after some improvement was made upon them, *Hop-*

kintonian, or *Hopkinsian* sentiments. But these sentiments have so spread since that time among ministers, especially those who have since come on the stage, that there are now more than one hundred in the ministry who espouse the same sentiments, in the United States of America. And the number appears to be fast increasing, and these sentiments appear to be coming more and more into credit, and are better understood, and the odium which was cast on them and those who preached them, is greatly subsided.

This appears to me to be favourable to the cause of truth, and of Jesus Christ and to be ascribed to his power and grace, and is matter of great encouragement, in the midst of the spread of error and delusion, of infidelity, and all manner of vice and wickedness. And so far as I have been made a mean and instrument, of this by my writings, preaching and conversation, I have reason to rejoice and be thankful, while all is to be ascribed to the sovereign grace of the Redeemer. And I have particular reason to be thankful and rejoice that I have been the means of the conversion of more than one, who are now in the ministry, which they themselves think is a fact; and of enlightening and removing the prejudices of others, who were before in a great measure blind to those truths, which they now see to be evident and important. May I not re-

joice in this? And may I not hope "to rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain?" May God have all the glory, Amen.

N. B. I finished writing the foregoing sketches of my life on the 21st day of July 1796.

This is an addition to the former sketches of my life finished July 21, 1796, having lived to this day December 16, 1799.

SOON after I had finished the foregoing sketches, Mrs. Osborn died, and left all her manuscripts in my hands, with a desire that I would make that use of them that I thought proper. And it was thought best to publish memoirs of her life, consisting chiefly in extracts from her writings, which were many. This made it necessary to read all her manuscripts which filled above forty volumes of considerable bigness; in order to extract for publication what should be thought necessary, in order to be most useful. On this, and in transcribing for the press I employed all my spare time for a year or more. It makes a volume in print of near four hundred pages.

I consider it as a great and peculiar favor of the head of the church, that he has, in his providence, given me opportunity to publish the lives

of Mrs. Osborn and Miss Anthony, who were, in my judgment, the most eminent female christians with whom I have had any acquaintance. The public and even christians, who never were acquainted with them, will not, by reading what is published of them, have a full and adequate idea of their excellent character. I think it a great happiness to have been intimately acquainted with them for near thirty years, and to enjoy their friendship and prayers. I hope that what is published of them will be of great benefit to the church not only in this generation, but in ages yet to come.

On the tenth of last January I was suddenly seized with a paralytic stroke, which affected my right side, and rendered my limbs of that side in a great measure useless, and much affected my speech; but was attended with little or no pain; and the exercise of my reason and mental faculties was not in the least affected. This appeared to threaten my speedy dissolution in my view and in the view of my friends, either by a greater and more deadly stroke, or some other way. To be sure I seasonably considered it as a warning to be ready for death. I felt that God had laid his hand lightly upon me, and that the affliction was attended with much tender mercy; and was resigned and thankful. For a short time at first, my mind was dark, and I seemed to myself to be in a measure shut out from the

sensible presence of God and the Saviour : but soon I was led to a view and sense of Jesus Christ, as exalted to the throne of the universe, having all power in heaven and earth, cloathed with infinite power, wisdom, rectitude and goodness, governing the world and ordering every event, the least and greatest, as it shall be most for his glory, and the greatest general good ; having mercy on whom he will have mercy, and hardening whom he will ; and showing mercy to every one, to whom he can do it, consistently with wisdom and goodness : That is, consistently with the greatest display of his character and perfections, and the highest happiness of the creation : and that all this, and every thing and event and circumstance were determined and fixed from eternity, by eternal unerring wisdom, righteousness and goodness. In this view the Saviour appeared infinitely great and important, and divinely worthy and amiable. I felt myself and all creatures and things to be in his hands, and was pleased and rejoiced in this ; knowing that every thing was ordered and conducted in the wisest and best possible manner, so as to answer the best and most desirable ends ; that the Saviour would injure none, fulfil all his promises to a tittle, and accomplish all his designs in the best time and the most desirable and perfect manner : so that all is well, in the best and most desirable situation that possibly can be. In a belief and sense of this, and more, which cannot

be expressed, my soul was full of comfort and joy, saying "the Lord Jesus Christ reigns, let the earth rejoice. Our God is in the heavens he hath done, doth, and will do whatsoever he pleaseth."

In these pleasing and comfortable views and exercises I had no particular attention to or thought of myself, whether I were a christian and should be saved or not. But my comfort and joy were derived from, or rather consisted in a view and sense of the excellent, glorious character of Christ, in whose hands I and all things were, and who would order and dispose of things concerning me and all men and creatures, so as in the highest degree to promote his glory, or the glory of God, which is the same; and effect the greatest general good or happiness, or the wisest and best ends. In this view my heart said, with strong emotions, and the most pleasing sensations, Amen! "Thy will be done!" without knowing or considering, what his will was concerning me. Had I reflected judiciously on my own exercises, I might have rationally judged them to be agreeable to the truth, and an evidence that I was a friend to Christ; but I did not so reflect as to make this conclusion. This view and sense of things still abides with me, but at different times in a higher and lower degree; but not so that I can infer from it, without hesitation, that I am a real christian, and

shall be saved. My views and exercises appear to me, so much below the truth, and so inconstant that, sometimes, I doubt of their reality, or of their being real christian exercises: and I have such a deceitful heart, that I fear delusion; though at times all doubts subside. My person and whole interest in time and to eternity is, compared with the grand whole, the glory of God, and the best interest of his kingdom, so small and inconsiderable, that when I have the latter in a sensible view, the former sinks into a mere speck or nothing, and is almost wholly overlooked and forgotten, and the language of my heart is, "Let God be glorified by all, and the best interest of his kingdom be secured and promoted, let what will become of me and my interest!" And while I see the former grand interest is secure, and will be in the best manner promoted, I am satisfied and rejoice. And this so engrosses my thoughts and reflections, that I do not attend to the interest of any individual person, my own or any one else, so as to excite any sensible joy or sorrow, hope or fear; the interest of such individual being overlooked as not worthy of any regard, in comparison with the grand interest, of the whole: This so impresses the mind and fills it, as to exclude the other.

But as my mind cannot have a view of all objects with equal clearness and attention, at one and the same time, but different objects, are

more attended to, and make a greater impression at some times than at others, so when I attend more particularly to my own state and interest, I naturally reflect upon the views and affections and enjoyments I have experienced in attending to the person, character and works of Christ, and the greatness, glory and happiness of his kingdom; and the inference seems to be plain, that I am a friend to these objects: but I am not able always, if at any time, to see the truth of this consequence with clearness and certainty. When the clearness and sensibility of these views and exercises in a measure subside, and I attend more to my own character; and my depravity, stupidity, unbelief, and the evil and deceitfulness of my heart rise into view, I am disposed to call in question my own good estate, and to suspect that my exercises fall short of real christianity: yet maintaining a hope that this is not the case, which is sometimes weaker and sometimes stronger; and, frequently for a short space, rises so high as to exclude doubting: but even then, though this excites gratitude, it does not raise my comfort and joy to that degree, as does the direct view of the character of Christ and his kingdom, above-mentioned, without any particular attention to my own character and personal interest. When my doubts and fears prevail most, respecting my personal union to Christ, and I attend particularly to my personal concerns and interest, it appears, when consid-

ered by itself to be beyond all conception, and infinitely great, which I feel to be wholly in the hands of Christ, to be determined by him whether I shall be happy or miserable forever. And this is so far from being disagreeable to me, that I am highly pleased with it, and would not have it otherwise on any consideration whatever. I feel that I am in the best hands, and, in this respect, in the best situation, that I possibly could be in. He certainly will not injure me in any respect, or in the least degree. He is infinitely wise, good and merciful, and knows what is most for his own glory, and the highest good and happiness of his kingdom; and, can and will certainly save me and every one else with whom I have any connection, if it may be consistent with his glory and the greatest happiness of his kingdom, or consistent with wisdom and goodness, which is the same: And I cannot so much as wish or have the least desire to be saved on any other supposition; that is, if this be inconsistent with infinite wisdom and goodness, and contrary to the greatest good and glory of Christ and his kingdom: and feel that it would be awful impiety and rebellion to ask for salvation on any other supposition.

But when I reflect on the dreadfulness of being cast away for ever by Christ, to suffer the just desert of my sins, feeling the strokes and tokens of his righteous anger and vengeance; and being

given up to evil lusts to join with the devil and exist eternally on his side an enemy to Christ and his kingdom, my soul recoils, and feels this to be intolerable ! then I fly to Christ and his atonement, and cast myself down at his feet, to dispose of me as he pleases ; yet hoping and crying for mercy, Oh ! be merciful to me a sinner. Which is accompanied with a number of various exercises which cannot be easily described.

And when I reflect on these exercises they appear to me to be consistent with christianity, and an evidence of real friendship to Christ : and I am sensible that if another person should relate to me such views and exercises as experienced by him, I should think them an evidence that he was a real christian. Yet I often greatly doubt of my being a true christian ; especially when I have some more clear view and sense of my barren and sinful life, and attend particularly to that.

These are some of my daily various exercises, in all which I always maintain a hope that I am a christian, which sometimes excludes all doubt, being constantly assured of the truth of the gospel, that this is a revelation of the only true God, and of eternal life ; and, that the truths which I have preached as contained in the gospel, are indeed the truths of God, and sufficient to support and comfort a christian in the near view of

death and eternity, and under all the afflictions of this life. And I live in the constant assurance of the truth of the doctrine of the decrees of God, and of his universal and particular providence directing every event, and every thing which comes to pass, and exercising absolute sovereignty in his dealing with men ; without which I could have no support and comfort. And my chief comfort and joy, does not consist in or arise from an assurance or hope that I shall be saved ; but in a view and sense of the perfections and glory of Christ, his power, wisdom and goodness, reigning and ordering all things for the glory of God and the greatest good of his kingdom. And this is accompanied with an experimental assurance, that the exercises of true religion are wholly disinterested, and in direct opposition to all selfishness : a doctrine which I have endeavoured to maintain and inculcate for many years.

When I was first taken with this disorder, and for most of the time since, I have had little or no sensible desire of recovering, and was not inclined so much as to ask for it ; my mind rather reluctated at the thought of recovering so as to preach after the poor dull way in which I had hitherto preached, and with as little success. But God has been pleased to recover me, so that I have been able to attend public worship and preach for several months past ; and, I do not

feel that preaching hurts me, or aggravates my disorder; which encourages me to proceed: but with many and great discouragements from my own great deficiencies, and the want of a proper attention, apparent in the congregation in general. But Christ will answer his own ends by me, and continue me in the world, and take me out of it in the best time and manner, so as best to answer these ends: and in this I daily acquiesce and rejoice. Amen!

January 10, 1800. As I think it may be useful particularly to attend to, and record those exercises, which appear to me to be an evidence that I am a real christian, and at times, are satisfactory and remove all doubt, when they are more strong and sensible, and I reflect upon them with more particular attention, and they appear real and certain.—And, on the contrary, mention and describe those things which I find in myself which appear against me as evidences that I am not a christian, and sometimes are the ground of strong suspicion and doubt whether I am a real friend to Christ.

The former of these may be represented in the following particulars.

1. I have been so far convinced of my sins and reprov'd for them, that I know that I am infinitely guilty, and deserve eternal destruction and

misery : that God would be just, and I should have no reason to complain, if he should punish me forever, with aggravated torments. This conviction is abiding and increasing, while I heartily approve of the law of God which curses the transgressor, as holy just and good. This conviction and sense of the evil of sin, and of my depravity and sinfulness, rises much higher sometimes than others ; but I am never disposed to cast it off or doubt the truth of it, but it is fixed on my mind, and when I have the greatest sense of it, I know that I see but little of what it really is in the sight of God, that the number of my sins and the magnitude and aggravations of each one are infinitely beyond my comprehension, and are known perfectly to God alone. That I am wholly and beyond expression depraved and sinful naturally, being infinitely far from any moral goodness to recommend me to the mercy and favour of God : and that if my heart be changed so as to exercise holiness in any degree, yet this is so defective, and attended with so much moral defilement and sin, that all taken together, it is worse than nothing, and affords matter of condemnation, and is infinitely far from deserving any good or favour. And if I were wholly recovered from my depravity and were made perfectly holy, this would be so infinitely overbalanced by the guilt of my sins, that it could not be reckoned in my favour, so as to procure the pardon of my sins, or render me de-

erving of any good thing. I have a constant and growing conviction that I am wholly dependant on the preventing, soveraign grace of God for my recovery, from this miserable, lost state of infinite guilt and total depravity, and for the least degree of sincerity and faith or conformity to the law of God; that I am wholly lost, and shall sink down to hell an enemy to God and all good, and justly perish forever, unless Christ, by his soveraign goodness, cloathed with omnipotence and infinite wisdom, shall recover and save me, while I shall not do any thing towards my salvation, or make the least exertion for it; but all that I will and do is contrary to it, unless and no farther than he shall work in me to will and to do, of his soveraign good pleasure, what he requires as necessary to my salvation. Thus I feel myself to be an infinitely guilty, odious creature, utterly undone in myself, and have not a word to say, and have not a thought in my favour; my mouth is stopped in this respect, and I am guilty before God, and accept the punishment of my iniquity.

If this which I have imperfectly described implies the essentials of real repentance, in which I humble myself in the sight of the Lord, with a broken and contrite heart, then I have a new heart and am interested in the divine promises.— But if not,—Then I have never yet understood the true meaning of these words of scripture,

and my eyes are yet blinded with regard to my own character !

2. I think I do most heartily approve of, and acquiesce in the person and character of Christ, and am pleased with the way of salvation of sinners by him. All his directions, exhortations, commands, doctrines which he taught, all that he said, did and suffered, and all his revealed purposes and designs, appear wise, good and excellent, and carry clear marks and abundant evidence of divinity in them. Hence

3. I do, I think, place all my hope in him, and desire not to be found and accepted in any righteousness of my own, were this possible; but to be pardoned and justified by the merit and righteousness of Christ. I am sensibly and greatly pleased with being wholly dependant on him for righteousness, sanctification, and compleat redemption. If there were any other possible way of salvation, which I know there is not, I would reject it, not desiring to be saved in any way but that which is revealed in the gospel.

4. I think I desire and seek the glory of God and the greatest good and happiness of the universe, as my highest and ultimate end; and in this view am pleased with and rejoice in the character and designs of God and Christ, who is doing every thing for this end, and will accomplish it in the most perfect manner, and in the

highest possible degree. And on this account I am highly pleased with Christ and the gospel, as by the redemption of man by Christ, God is glorified in an eminent degree, and the greatest happiness of creatures promoted and effected. And for this reason I acquiesce in it that all of the human race should not be saved, but a part of them perish forever in their sins, as divine revelation has declared ; because I know this is necessary for the glory of God, and the greatest good of his eternal kingdom, and not one will be lost forever, who could be saved consistently with this ; and therefore all will be saved who can be saved consistently with infinite wisdom and goodness. Therefore

5. I am most satisfied and pleased, when I have the most clear and feeling sense of my being in the hands of Christ in the most perfect and absolute sense and degree, and wholly at his disposal in time and to eternity ; knowing that he will do with and by me what is most for his glory and the good of his kingdom ; and that he will save me, if he can do it consistently with this ; and this is all that I can desire. Therefore I am well pleased with being in his hands and wholly at his disposal, let him do what he will with me, and cannot conceive of a better and more desirable situation : yea, I know there cannot be a better.

When I reflect on the feelings and exercises ex-

pressed in the two last particulars, they seem to me to be the expression of true disinterested benevolence, or that *love* by which we are formed after the likeness of God, and he dwelleth in us, and we in him. The reason of my doubting of this, especially at times, has been in some measure suggested before, and will be more fully expressed in the sequel.

6. I think I do hunger and thirst after righteousness. My longing to be perfectly holy is, sometimes, very sensible and strong, exceeding all desires of earthly things that I have, or of which I am capable. I have often, felt willing and a desire to die immediately, if this might bring me to perfect holiness, to a complete conformity to Christ.

7. I feel my heart strongly united to those whom I consider to be real friends to Christ, in benevolent and complacential love; especially those with whom I am more particularly and intimately acquainted. I have a quite different feeling toward them from that which I have toward others, and have a peculiar delight in their company and conversation.

8. My preaching and conversation has been generally acceptable and pleasing to those whom I have esteemed the most judicious and best christians, so far as I have been able to learn.

I have not only preached the doctrines which I verily believed to be true, but heartily approved of them, and have delivered those truths of the word of God respecting practical and experimental religion, which were the dictates of my heart, and often, if not commonly, suggested by my own feelings and exercises; and have not endeavoured to appear better or in a more agreeable light, than was agreeable to the truth, though I am sensible that my christian friends, have in many instances and respects, thought too highly of me, which has been matter of shame and humiliation to me; yet their love and esteem, I have been ready to consider as an evidence in my favour, though of little weight considered by itself, as we know not each others hearts, and are liable to be greatly deceived in others. I therefore mention this as coinciding with, and in some measure strengthening the evidences which have been mentioned. This is at least an evidence that what appears in my preaching, conversation and external conduct, which, so far as I know, is in general agreeable to my heart, at least I do not on design attempt to play the hypocrite, is to judicious christians, who are most acquainted with me, an evidence that I am a real christian.

I proceed to mention some things which appear to me, at times at least, reason of fear that I never have known what it is to be a real christ-

tian, and are at times, if not generally the cause of many doubts.

1. My stupidity and hardness of heart, with respect to things divine and invisible, or the truths exhibited in the gospel. At times, and I believe I may say generally, I have very little or no sense of these things, and they make very little impression on my heart, if any; and I often feel as if they had no existence, while in my reason and judgment I have no doubt of their truth and reality: And when I have some sense of the truth, reality and excellence of them, and even when I have the greatest sense and the most affecting view and impression of them on my heart, and I am most strongly and deeply affected with them, I am sensible that the view and sense I have is very imperfect and unspeakably short of the truth, and of what I ought to have, and even the greatest impression, and highest affection that I at any time experience, commonly soon abate and subside, and I am left as stupid and senseless as ever: and what I thought I had experienced seems like a dream, and as if, it was not a reality. This stupidity and senselessness is commonly most sensible and burdensome in my public performances of prayer and preaching; and even when I have freedom of speech and a flow of words, and my christian friends have thought I was greatly assisted, I have been conscious of my great and shameful stupidity and

want of a proper sense of the things of which I have been speaking. This, which is more or less sensibly felt, is my constant attendant, and the grief and burden of my heart, and matter of my constant confessions and prayer to God for deliverance from it; being always sensibly convinced that no external light and advantages, or any means used, will in the least remove this stupidity and hardness of heart; but that the spirit of God alone can remove it, and give me that spiritual sensibility and feeling of heart, which I seem most earnestly to desire. I consider this stupidity, blindness and insensibility of heart to divine things, to be altogether, and infinitely criminal, as it must be owing to the moral corruption and depravity of my heart, or rather consist wholly in depravity and wickedness of heart, being hardened, contracted and bound up in selfishness and pride, and all the evil propensities which are implied in these. This is *unbelief of heart*, which is consistent with a conviction of the reason and judgment, of the truths contained in the gospel; for no degree of such conviction will in the least remove this blindness, hardness and *unbelief of heart*, which I am considering. But blindness and *unbelief of heart* have a strong tendency to prevent or remove a conviction of the judgment and conscience of the truth and reality of invisible things, and to promote speculative *unbelief of them*; and, are the real and only ground of all deism and atheism, and all specu-

lative infidelity. This gives Satan great advantage to blind the minds of them who believe not, and lead them captives to infidelity, which he improves to the utmost of his power.

I do not sensibly perceive the real ground and reason of this darkness and stupidity of my mind with respect to invisible things, but am most sensible of the fact, while the cause of this lamentable fact is out of sight, and is rather the object of reason and speculation. This blindness and stupidity of heart are so sensible and appear so great to me, especially at times, that I much doubt whether it be consistent with the true knowledge of God, or my having any real christian light and discerning, which Christ calls "the light of life," which he gives to all his true followers. Yet I know that when I hear professing christians complain of their stupidity and blindness, &c. I do not consider this as an evidence that they are not christians, but rather in their favour, as a sign that they have a sensibility and discerning respecting their own hearts, which is peculiar to christians. But it is not easy for me to apply this to myself, and draw such a consequence in my own favour. I am apt to consider my blindness and stupidity not to be like that of others, but greater and peculiar to myself.

2. My life and conversation, all taken to-

gether, both external and internal, appear very much against me, and so destitute of any good fruit, and so full of deformity and sin both of omission and commission, that I know not how to reconcile it with the life of a christian, especially at some times, when I have a view of it as a most deformed and odious life, considering the many and peculiar advantages and opportunities I have had, and my great obligations to live a holy life, wholly devoted to Christ; all which I have abused in a greater or less degree continually. Though I dare not say I have not been, and am not in any degree sincere in my regard to Christ and the truths of the gospel; and have a hope that I have had and now have some sincerity: Yet I cannot look back upon a *well spent life*, for it appears unspeakably far from such an one. I have often said, "I will be wise," but it has been far from me. I cannot view myself as a *good and faithful servant* of Jesus Christ, but much to the contrary; and therefore cannot realize it, or even conceive how he can view and call me such an one, as he represents that he will do all who shall be owned by him at the last day. This is often cause of great doubts, and fears that I am not a real servant of Jesus Christ. I know he will own and accept of the least thing done for him from a true regard to him, but I feel that I have nothing that I have done to plead in my favour.

3. It has been matter of doubt and discouragement to me, that I have little or no success by my preaching, in being made the instrument of awakening and converting sinners. But very few instances of this have come to my knowledge, and these not very remarkable and clear. I came upon the stage and began to preach when there was a great and general revival of religion in New-England; many were awakened, and thought to be converted, and many ministers were successful in this, and had great revivals in their congregations: but no such thing has appeared under my preaching, though some individuals have sometimes appeared to be in some degree awakened. I should expect that a good minister of Christ would be succeeded in this respect especially when others round about him were successful, more than I have appeared to be. This has led me to fear, especially at times, that there is some essential defect in me, and that I had not the true spirit of Christ, and his real presence and approbation. I do not think I have reason to conclude that my ministrations in preaching, writing and conversation have been altogether useless and unprofitable. They have been acceptable to many, if not to all, who have appeared to be christians, especially to the most attentive, engaged and judicious; and many have thought themselves greatly instructed, strengthened and comforted by them; and my usefulness, if there has been any, has not con-

sisted in being the mean of convincing and converting sinners ; but chiefly in ministering to the saints and building them up in faith and holiness : and I believe my publications have been the means of spreading light with respect to some important doctrines of christianity. This I consider as matter of thankfulness ; but, it does not wholly remove my gloom and doubts, which arise from the inefficacy of my preaching, with respect to sinners ; and when I attend to the great and shameful defects and poorness of my preaching, and the little sense I have of what I do say, &c. together with want of success, I don't wonder my preaching is without effect, and my doubts of my having any true grace are increased.

Thus I have endeavoured to state those things which appear to be evidences in favour of my being a real christian, and those which, on the contrary, appear to be evidences against it. There are many other things, which, in themselves perhaps, are of less weight, but when considered with those mentioned both for and against me, sometimes have considerable influence on my mind to increase my hopes or fears : but as they are not easily described ; and are in some measure included in the above particulars, I pass them over without a more particular mention.

When I have only or chiefly a *speculative* view

of all these things which have been mentioned, and more, both for and against me, and they are seldom out of my thoughts ; the whole taken together to my reason and judgment appear to be rather in my favour, and ground of hope that I am what I profess to be, a real christian. But this speculative view, without any great degree of sense of heart, is not attended with any comfortable assurance, or sensible enjoyment, as this consists in a *sense of heart* of the truth and excellency of the things of the gospel, which is entirely different from the clearest speculative view of them. This sense of heart is various, sometimes in a greater, and some times in a less degree, and some times has a particular object in view, and at other times another object is more in view and makes the greatest impression, and the heart cannot be equally sensible of all objects at once, or one must be more in view than another.

This is agreeable to my experience. When I have an impressivè and affecting sense of heart of the truths of the gospel, and those sensible views and exercises which have been mentioned as evidences in my favour, and my attention is fixed on those objects, my doubts vanish, and I think little or nothing of myself, and my own character : but the objects viewed engross my attention. But when I reflect on my present exercises, my hope revives and is strengthened ;

but I have great comfort and enjoyment independent of my hope, and while my own state is not attended to. Indeed my comfort and enjoyment are previous to the revival of my hope, and the ground of it. For instance, when I have an affecting view and sense of heart of the glorious character of Christ, his works and designs, his exaltation and dominion, &c. this is attended with a sensible, sweet approbation of heart of all that is seen and that relates to him, and gives high satisfaction and enjoyment, when this view and sense, approbation and delight, &c. are reflected upon, be it sooner or later : and while these sensible views and exercises continue and do not subside, my hope of my interest in these things revives, and my doubts vanish : and often, if not always, this reflection is so immediate, that it seems to attend these views, exercises and enjoyments, and to be so connected with and implied in them, that I do not distinguish one from the other in my own feelings, but the hope and even assurance of my interest in Christ seems to be *intuitive* and I am not conscious that it is by reflection.

But when my sensible exercises towards these affecting objects, and my attention to them in some measure subside, and those things which have been mentioned as evidences against me are more clearly in my view, which of course will be the case, and are the objects of my

particular and painful attention, they preponderate in the scale of my mind, and doubts arise, and some times greatly prevail ; and, I question the truth and reality of my former views and exercises, or that they were truly gracious, and they appear rather as a dream than a reality.

Thus my mind fluctuates, and passes from one object to another, and has sometimes more clear and sensible views of one object than of another, and is more impressed and affected with it : and then the other has its turn of attracting my sensible attention, and the former goes more, if not wholly, out of view for a time. And I believe a christian cannot live without doubts of his good estate, and maintain a well grounded uninterrupted confidence and assurance that he is a christian, unless he lives in a view and sense of divine truth, and in the exercise of christian grace. I am in some measure sensible that it is wholly my fault that I do not live so, in such constant view and sense of divine truth and high exercise of constant love to Christ, and faith in and devotedness to him, which would exclude all doubts of my interest in him, and be attended with an assurance that I have the spirit of Christ. And I desire no other evidence of my interest in Christ but this ; or, to be assured of my good estate in any other way, but in the lively exercise of true grace. I have been acquainted with some professing christians, who

have declared that they have lived many years without a doubt of their good estate, and they were constantly assured that they were interested in Christ and should be saved, who did not appear to me to have any solemn constant sense of the truths of christianity, or to live answerable to such a profession; and therefore am disposed to think they are deluded, and most probably have no grace at all.

There are others, who appear to be real, and some of them excellent christians by their life and conversation, who appear never to call in question or doubt their having true grace; but some how always take it for granted as a settled point that they are christians: while there are others who appear to be as good and eminent christians as the former, who have many doubts, especially at times, of their being real christians, and never speak of their being such with that confidence as the former do, nor without an *if*, or some hesitation. These may, perhaps, both be equally good christians, and have equally strong and high exercises of grace at times, and their difference above mentioned may be owing to their different natural temper, or education, or the different public instruction they have lived under, or to the circumstances and manner of their first discoveries of divine truth, and peculiar impressions and exercises when they were converted or afterwards, or from some-

thing else which is not known to them or to us. But it is probable they are both in some degree wrong in two opposite extremes. The former being habituated to consider themselves to be christians without having the present evidence of it in their own minds by the sensible exercise of grace, relying upon it that they have had such exercises often, and an assurance that they did devote themselves to Christ, and that he was their chosen Saviour, &c. and think it is a sin ever to doubt of this. And perhaps they, at least some of them, think, having been taught so, that this is *living by faith, and not by sight*, and that it is a sin to doubt, let their present frame and exercises of mind be what they may.

The latter have minds of a contrary cast. They are disposed to be diffident with respect to their own exercises which may be supposed to be those of real christians. They are habituated to look on the dark side, and draw conclusions against themselves. Though, at times, they have such views and exercises as to revive their hope, and even remove all doubt of their being real christians. Yet when these exercises subside in a considerable degree at least, and they see much in their heart, contrary to these, their doubts arise and they fear they have been deluded. They attend most to the evils in their hearts and lives, their selfishness and pride, hardness of heart and unbelief, &c. their want

of love to God and great deficiency in every right exercise, if they have the least degree of them ; and they view their lives as very defective and unfruitful, the fruit of sloth and indifference to the most affecting and important things &c. &c. They are disposed to dwell most upon these things in their thoughts and meditations, which tends to keep up a gloom in their minds and a despondency which seems not so well to become christians, who are required to be cheerful and to rejoice always. These therefore do undoubtedly err on the other hand from the former, though the source and manner of their error may not be easily discovered and explained. If I am a real christian, I must be numbered with the latter, though differing in some respects perhaps, from many of them, if not from all. But I could wish that I were such a christian as not to be justly classed with either the former or the latter ; but with those who live in such a constant affecting view and sense of invisible, eternal things, and in the exercise of such pleasing approbation of the character of Christ, and such strong and sensible love to him, as to exclude all doubt, and enable me at all times, to say with Peter, " Lord, thou knowest that I love thee."

They who oppose faith to sensibility and all gracious exercise of heart are grossly erroneous and absurd in their notion of true spiritual sensi-

bility and of faith, and they wholly pervert and misapply the words of the Apostle Paul, when he says, "We live by faith, and not by sight," for he does not here oppose faith to spiritual sight and sensibility of heart; but to the discerning and sight of the things of this present world. Not living by sight is the same with not looking at the things which are seen

Faith is spiritual sight and sensibility of heart, and where the one is not, the other cannot exist, and to attempt to distinguish and separate them is just as unreasonable and absurd as to attempt to make two different things of that which is one and the same thing. Spiritual sight and discerning of invisible things, or the truth revealed in the gospel, imply sensibility and exercise of heart, and in this true faith consists, or this is the essence of faith, so that where this is not, there is no true faith; for *with the heart*, man believeth, and none have saving faith but they who believe the truths of the gospel *with all their heart*. Faith worketh by love. That is, faith acts and operates efficaciously by love. Love is the life and active nature of faith; so that where there is no love, there is no faith, but that which is a lifeless dead one. Faith purifieth the heart, it is itself purity of heart by which it sees God, and consequently all those invisible things which are implied in his Being and perfections, and which he has revealed to man. Faith is the *single eye*

which belongs to the heart, is the same with purity of heart, by which the mind sees the truth and is filled with spiritual light, love and holy affection.

There is therefore no such thing possible as living by faith, without spiritual sight and that sensibility of heart in which is implied the exercise of every christian grace ; for this is a plain contradiction, and a dangerous error. So that they are under a great delusion, who think that they are living, in this sense by faith and not by sight ; for this is the same with living by faith and not living by faith. Such either have no idea of faith, or they mean by it a mere speculative belief which wicked men and devils may have : Or by faith they mean a persuasion or belief that Christ died for them, that they are interested in all the promises of the covenant of grace, &c. This indeed appears to be the meaning of most, if not all of those of whom I am now speaking. They hold that saving faith is believing that Christ is *my* Saviour, and that consequently all his promises are mine, &c. or that this belief is necessarily implied in saving faith, and essential to it. They contend that this faith is not founded on any evidence from within ourselves, any exercise of heart, of love to God, &c. but it is a direct persuasion and undoubting belief that Christ died for me and is mine and will save me, without any evidence that I have

any sensibility or friendliness of heart towards his character, or consciousness of any thing in me different from what was always there, or from what any man in the world has. In short, it is a faith or belief not grounded on any evidence discerned in ourselves, by which we differ from any other sinner, and to which any promise is made; and without any evidence of what we believe from the bible or any reason whatever. This is with them a strong heroic faith, and even the only true saving faith; for it is their opinion that men cannot have any grace in their hearts, such as love to Christ, repentance, &c. until they believe that Christ loves them and died for them. This faith and persuasion being the cause or ground of every christian grace, and true sensibility and gracious affection of the heart. Hence they think that looking for any such thing in ourselves, as an evidence that we have an interest in Christ and shall be saved by him, is an uncertain and legal way of obtaining assurance, and not to be depended on, and will be attended with endless doubts and uncertainty, at best.

Mr. Marshal wrote a book, many years ago, on this plan, and expressly says that faith, by which he means believing that Christ is ours, and that we shall be saved by him, is not grounded on any thing we find in ourselves, which has been wrought in us by the spirit of God, or on any evidence from *scripture, or sense, or reason*; but

this proposition that Christ and salvation are ours, we must believe and be assured is true, without any evidence of the truth of it from any thing whatsoever. And from *this faith* when men attain to it, the heart will be filled with love to God and every christian grace. This book has had a number of editions, and has been read and admired by thousands. Mr. Hervey a late noted and celebrated writer in England, was in the same scheme with Mr. Marshal, and he speaks of his book in terms of warm approbation, and recommends it as the next book to the bible. Mr. Hervey's dialogues, which are on this plan, have had a great run and have been greatly approved by religious people in general. And no man has expressly written against his and Marshal's notion of faith, &c. in Great-Britain that I have heard of; and their scheme or something like it, is generally embraced now by those who call themselves calvinists both clergy and laity in Great-Britain. The only person who has written expressly against these writers, and exposed the falsehood and absurdity of their notion of love to God, faith in Christ, and assurance of a title to eternal life, is Doctor Bellamy, which book is read but by very few in Great-Britain; partly, I suppose, because it exposes and condemns the sentiments of these men on the heads mentioned, who are in high esteem there for their eminent piety. But were they ever so truly pious in heart, and religious and exemplary in

their conduct ; yet these principles, which they advocated, are not the less, but the more dangerous and mischievous on that account, and therefore ought to be exposed, in all their falsehood, absurdity and evil tendency. For they are indeed directly contrary to the scripture, to sense and reason, and of the most dangerous and hurtful tendency ; and represent experimental religion as the most irrational and absurd thing that was ever imagined. The papists' doctrine of transubstantiation, and any doctrine contained in the alcoran of the Mahometans, is not more contradictory, irrational and absurd than these sentiments are, with whatever artful and specious colors they may be dressed up.

I have dwelt thus long on this head as these sentiments appear to me so contrary to scripture, and are of such pernicious tendency, and are contrary to all my religious experience, as they are to my reason. But if I am not a christian, and all my exercises of heart and religious experiences fall short of true religion, and are mere delusion ; yet I am certain that the sentiments concerning love to God, faith in Jesus Christ, and assurance of an interest in him now mentioned, cannot be true, but are gross delusion ; and they, whose exercises of heart, and experimental religion are wholly built upon these principles, are awfully deluded, and strangers to real religion. I will now mention some of the reasons on which my assurance of *this* is grounded.

1. Such a faith has no evidence of what is believed, and therefore is without foundation, and a mere delusion. They say it is believing that of which there is no evidence from scripture, sense or reason; and this implies that it is contrary to scripture, sense and reason, for what is not agreeable to these must be contrary to them. And we are certain it is contrary to reason and scripture to believe without any evidence, and the latter abundantly declares that they have no interest in Christ, who do not come to him, and are not possessed of that which implies love to him. Therefore such a belief is a delusion and a belief of a lie.

2. Such a faith is not the faith which the gospel describes. No such faith is spoken of as saving faith. It does not consist in believing Christ is mine, &c. but in believing with all the heart that he is the son of God, &c. And the evidence that we have this faith and those things which are implied in it, is the only good evidence we can have, according to scripture or the reason and nature of things, that Christ is our Saviour. This leads to another particular,

3. The assurance a man gets that Christ is his Saviour, only by believing it to be true without any evidence, is always false assurance, and only the belief of a lie. There is no other true assurance or belief that Christ is our Saviour, but

that which is grounded on evidence that something has taken place in us which implies a new heart, and real love to him, which is real holiness. So that sanctification of heart is the only good evidence any one can have of justification, or an interest in Christ.

4. This plan is wholly built upon selfishness, and according to it self-love is the foundation of love to God, and of all christian grace. Therefore in order to our loving God, we must believe he loves us, and Christ died for us, &c. But this is not true love to God. And all the religion which is built on this plan is nothing but a piece of selfishness, which according to scripture and reason is not true religion, but wickedness.

END OF THE LIFE.

A
DIALOGUE,
BETWEEN A
CALVINIST
AND A
SEMI-CALVINIST.

DIALOGUE

CRITICISM

SEMI-CRITICISM

A DIALOGUE.

SEMI-CALVINIST.

SIR, I have wanted, for some time, to talk with you about the notion, which some lately advance, viz. That christians may, yea, that they ought, and must be willing to perish forever, in order to be christians. This is a shocking doctrine to me : For I believe it absolutely impossible for any one to be willing to be eternally wretched ; and, if it were possible, it would be very wicked ; for we are commanded to do that which is directly contrary to this, viz. to desire and seek to escape damnation, and to be saved ; as all our most considerable and best divines have taught, which I could easily prove, were it necessary.

CALVINIST. I can decide nothing upon this matter until I know what is meant by being *willing to be miserable forever*, by those who assert this, or *you*, who oppose it. Let me then ask you, Do you suppose that by being willing to be miserable is meant a being pleased with damnation, or choosing to be miserable forever, *for its own sake* or in itself considered ; and preferring misery, eternal misery, and being just as the damned will be, to eternal happiness, and being just as the blessed will be forever, considering the form-

er as being in itself better than the latter ? This is doubtless impossible, and if it were not, would be very unreasonable and wicked. And I question whether any one ever believed this, or meant to assert it, by saying that christians ought to be willing to perish forever. But if by being willing to be cast off by God forever, be meant, that however great and dreadful this evil is ; yet a christian may and ought to be willing to suffer it, if it be necessary in order to avoid a *greater evil* ; or to obtain an overbalancing good, if such a case can be supposed : This, I think, is true, and ought to be maintained, as essential to the character of a christian ; and that the contrary doctrine is dangerous and hurtful. For it is essential to true benevolence to prefer a greater good to a less, and a less evil to a greater, and that whether it be private or public good or evil ; or his own personal good or evil, or that of others.

SEMI. I am unable to conceive what you mean by “ a greater evil ” than eternal damnation, or “ a greater good ” to be promoted by this evil. Is not this the greatest of all evils ? And what good is left for him, who is doomed to eternal misery ? I grant that a man may, and ought to subject himself, in many cases, to a less evil, in order to avoid a greater, or to obtain a greatly overbalancing good ; but in the proposed case all good is lost forever, and the greatest possible evil takes place, and nothing but evil, without end.

CALV. Is not the damnation of millions a greater evil than the damnation of a single person? And is not the eternal happiness of millions a greater good, than that of one individual? This I know you will grant. Supposing it were necessary for one individual to be miserable forever in order to save a million from this misery; and by his subjecting himself to this, they would all be saved from this evil, and be eternally happy: ought he not to be willing to perish, in such a case and on this supposition? And if he should not be willing to give himself up to this evil, to save a million from it, and to make them eternally happy, would he not prefer a million times greater evil to one a million times less; and choose a million times less good and prefer it to one a million times greater? And if this is not unreasonable and wicked, and directly contrary to true benevolence, what can be?

SEMI. This is making an impossible supposition. The damnation of one man cannot save one, much less a million.

CALV. I grant it is an impossible supposition; but it nevertheless serves to show that there may be a greater evil than the damnation of one individual; a good that will overbalance a million times, the evil of the damnation of one man; and that *on supposition*, this greater evil can be avoided, and the overbalancing good obtained, by the damnation of one man, and can be done no other way, then it is desirable he should be dam-

ned, and he ought to be willing, and to choose it. St. Paul makes this same supposition, when he says, "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh," and declares that he should be willing to perish and could even *wish it*, if by that means, all the nation of the Jews might be saved.

SEMI. This is carrying things too far. It is impossible that any man should be willing to give up *all good*, and to be miserable *forever*, for the sake of the good of others, be it ever so great. And you misunderstand St. Paul, when you suppose he says that he should be willing to perish for the sake of the salvation of his brethren. By being accursed from Christ, he means some temporary evil only, which he might suffer consistently with his being a christian, and his obtaining eternal life.

CALV. You implicitly grant in what you have just said, that a man may be willing to suffer evil, and a great degree of it, for the sake of the good of others: And indeed, this must be granted by all who allow there is any such thing in nature as disinterested benevolence, or loving our neighbour as ourselves. And that this is the nature of true love or charity the scripture asserts "charity seeketh not her own." And all men will grant that it is reasonable that a man should give up his own good to a great degree for the sake of his neighbour's good: He ought

to be willing, for instance, to endure hunger a whole day, to save his neighbour from starving : He ought to be willing to give up his whole worldly interest and comfort, and live a life of poverty and want, if this were necessary to save a whole nation from ruin, and make them rich and happy : yea, he ought to be willing to expose, and give up his life, if this were necessary for the good of his country, and to save the lives of millions.

And if this be the nature of benevolence, and most reasonable, what bounds can be set to it, and where shall it stop ? If true benevolence will give up twenty degrees of personal good for the sake of a thousand degrees of good to others : it will give up a thousand degrees, for the sake of obtaining fifty thousand degrees of good to others ; and so on, till he has given up *all* his own personal good for a proportionably greater good to the public. Nothing but a want of benevolence or a defect of it, can render a man unwilling, in the case proposed, to give up *all* his personal good. And there is the same reason for his doing it, as there is for his giving up one degree of his own good for the sake of procuring fifty degrees of good to others.

And if benevolence will lead a man to suffer one degree of pain and misery, in order to save another from an hundred degrees of pain, and it be most reasonable that he should ; then, for the same reason he will be willing to suffer an

hundred degrees of pain or positive evil, if this be necessary in order to save his neighbours from ten thousand degrees of evil ; and he must be willing to suffer all the positive evil and pain that he is capable of through the whole of his existence, if this be necessary to save an hundred thousand or even an hundred, from this evil. For there is the same reason why he should be willing to suffer *all this* for the sake of a proportionably greater good to others, as that he should be willing to suffer one degree, to save others from an hundred degrees. And if it be contrary to benevolence to be unwilling to suffer one degree, of evil to save others from an hundred degrees of it ; it must be equally contrary to it to be unwilling to suffer all possible degrees of evil, for the sake of saving others from a proportionably greater evil.

It hence appears that the apostle Paul, spoke the language of true benevolence, and declared he felt, as he ought to feel, when he said, he could wish himself *accursed from Christ*, if by this means his brethren might be saved, if we understand him as meaning, that he was willing to be lost forever for their sake, that they might be saved. And why shall he not be understood to say, what he ought to say, and to speak the language of true benevolence ; since this is the natural import of his words, and to be *accursed from Christ*, cannot mean less than eternal damnation, without putting an unnatural, forced

meaning upon them ? St. Paul certainly thought it was a great evil which he mentions, and was willing it should come upon him for the sake of his brethren ; since he meant hereby to express his love to them. If the evil were small and inconsiderable, it expressed but a small and inconsiderable degree of benevolence ; and the greater the evil was, which he was willing to suffer for their sake, the greater benevolence was expressed. He therefore doubtless mentioned the greatest evil, that he could conceive, and that he was capable of suffering ; when he meant to express the greatness and strength of his love to them. And, by the way, as it was no argument that Paul thought it to be a small evil or none at all to be *accursed from Christ*, or that he had no aversion to it, and that it was not dreadful to him ; but the contrary, because he was willing to suffer it, for the sake of his brethren : so it is no argument that any man does not think damnation infinitely dreadful, and has not a proper aversion to it, because he is willing to be damned, rather than a greater evil should take place, or for the sake of promoting a greater good.

SEMI. For my part, I must say, this is all darkness to me. How can these things be ?

CALV. Let us take another, or a little different view of this point ; perhaps it may be set in a more easy, convincing light. I conclude you will grant that the glory of God, or the greatest

and most advantageous display of the divine perfections, is of the highest importance ; and that it is reasonable, and our duty to make this our highest and supreme end, in all our desires and actions ; and that we ought not to be willing any thing should take place, inconsistent with his glory ; and that we ought to be willing *that* should take place, be it what it may, which is most for his glory ; even though it be the eternal damnation of sinners.

SEMI. I grant that we ought to make the glory of God our supreme end. But this will be so far from making us willing to be damned, that it will lead us to desire and pursue our salvation, that he may be glorified in that, and that we may glorify him forever.

CALV. But it is not for the glory of God that all should be saved ; but most for his glory that a number should be damned ; otherwise all would be saved. We will therefore now make a supposition, which is not an impossible one, viz. that it is most for God's glory, and for the universal good that you should be damned ; ought you not to be willing to be damned, on this supposition, that God could not be glorified by you in any other way ?

SEMI. You are full of your *suppositions* ; I will not, I cannot, I have no business to *suppose* any such thing.

CALV. You know that it is most for the glory of God that some should be damned. And

if you do not know that you are a christian, you do not know but it is in fact true, that it is most for the glory of God, that you should be damned; the supposition is therefore natural and easy, and you cannot well avoid making it. Supposing then this were true, which may be true, notwithstanding any thing you know, how ought you to feel with respect to it? ought you not to be willing to be damned?

SEMI. This is impossible!

CALV. I grant it is impossible to one who values himself, and his own personal interest and happiness, more than he does the glory of God, and the highest interest of his kingdom. And it is infallibly certain that every one who lives and dies with such a disposition, will and must be damned. But to him who loves God supremely, and desires his glory above all things, it is so far from being impossible to be willing to be damned, on supposition this is most for God's glory, that he could not will or choose any thing else. He must say, "let God be glorified, let what will become of me." If he cannot say so, it is because his own interest and happiness, are of more importance with him, than the glory of God; or in other words, because he is not a true friend, but an enemy to God.

SEMI. But suppose he knows he loves God, and therefore knows that it is for the glory of God that he should be saved?

CALV. No man can know that he loves God, until he does really love him; that is until he does seek his glory above all things, and is disposed to say, "let God be glorified, whatever may be necessary in order to it," without making any exception: and this is to be willing to be damned, if this be necessary for the glory of God. And as he cannot know that he loves God, till he has this disposition, which is necessarily implied in love to God, he does not know that it is not necessary for the glory of God that he should be damned. He therefore cannot know that he loves God, and shall be saved, until he knows he has that disposition which implies a willingness to be damned, if it be not most for the glory of God that he should be saved. And if any one thinks he loves God, and shall be saved; if he finds that his love to God does not imply, a willingness to be damned, if this were most for his glory, he has reason to conclude that he is deceived, and that what he calls love to God is really enmity against him. For he, who cannot love God on any supposition but that he will not damn but save him, is not a friend, but an enemy to God.

Let us examine this matter in a little different light still. I would ask the following question. Is it not reasonable, and a duty to submit to the will of God, and acquiesce in it, respecting his governing providence, and disposal of all things; so as to be able to say, "thy will be done," without making any exception?

SEMI. I cannot object against this ; it must be answered in the affirmative ; for God's will is infinitely wise and good, and it is rebellion against him to be unwilling that he should do as he pleases, or to make any exception whatever.

CALV. You have conceded all that is necessary, I think, in order to decide the point in dispute between us. God has revealed it to be his will to punish some of mankind forever. You know not but you are one of them. Whether you shall be saved or damned depends entirely on his will : And supposing he sees it most for his glory, and the general good that you should be damned, it is certainly his will that you should be damned. On this supposition then, you ought to be willing to be damned ; for not to be willing to be damned, in this case, is opposing God's will, instead of saying, " thy will be done."

In this case, it is easy to see that there is no way to escape damnation, but by being willing to be damned, on supposition it is the will of God to cast you off ; as there is no other way to submit to his will, and acquiesce in it, choosing his will should be done : Without which submission it is impossible a man should be saved. For to make any exception, and to be willing God should do as he pleases, *if he will save you*, and on no other condition, is no true submission to God ; but a setting up your will to be the rule of God's conduct towards you. And to attempt to get to heaven, or to obtain assurance or any

evidence that you shall be saved, in opposition to *such a submission* to the will of God, without making any condition, or exception in favour of yourself, is to fight against God, and to go in the road to hell.

SEMI. I think these things had better be let alone, supposing there be any truth in what you advance: for such a way of talking only tends to puzzle people, and to discourage, and perplex christians; and will be of no advantage to any body.

CALV. It may puzzle and discourage *half-christians*, who never were brought to an unreserved submission to the will of God, and to desire his glory, above all things. And it is to be wished they might be so discouraged, as to be convinced that they are not real christians. It may also puzzle some real christians, for a time, who have never carefully attended to this matter, so as to compare their own feelings with this truth, when rightly understood: They having never viewed this point in a true light, but by their education, and the instructions they have had, have imbibed prejudices against it, as it has been represented, or rather *mis*-represented to them. But when these have the truth fairly laid before them, and it is properly explained; it is to be presumed, it will be so far from perplexing and discouraging them, that it will remove all their prejudices, and it will become a strengthening, encouraging doctrine to them,

while they find their hearts in some measure, agreeing with this truth, and feel that to have God loose his honour, and the greatest general good not promoted; and the will of God not done, and his infinitely wise and good plan marr-ed and hurt: is to them an infinitely greater evil, than their own damnation, or that of millions of others. And if they cannot be saved, consistently with God's highest honour, and the greatest good of the whole, and agreeable to the divine will and plan, there can be no salvation for them, which they would desire; but are willing to be damned, if that only be consistent with all this.

But let the matter be stated on a yet different footing, and the same truth, I believe, will turn up to view, and perhaps, with some additional evidence, if it can be made more evident. You believe, I conclude, that God will for his own glory, and the greatest general good, punish many of mankind with everlasting destruction.

SEMI. To be sure.

CALV. And to this, I suppose you have no objection; but acquiesce in it, and are quite willing it should be so, since it is necessary for the glory of God, and the greatest good of the whole.

SEMI. Yes, since this is the will of God, and necessary to answer the end you have mentioned, I am willing they should be miserable forever.

CALV. And how do you know that it is not as necessary that you should be damned to answer the same ends, as that any one else should ; and that therefore it is the will of God to damn you with them ? At least, we may make the supposition that this is really so. How do you feel on this state of the case. Are you willing to be damned, if it be necessary to answer the same end, that is sought by the damnation of others, and for the sake of which you are willing *they* should be damned ?

SEMI. This is a hard question, I suspect there is some puzzle in it.

CALV. It appears to me to be a plain case. If there be the same reason, and the same necessity, that you should be damned, as that others should be cast off ; and this is a sufficient reason with you to be willing *they* should be damned ; then *for the same reason*, you must be willing to be damned yourself, and cannot but be willing, if you feel according to reason, and love your neighbour as well and as much as yourself. You must, therefore, if you would not be inconsistent, either disapprove of your neighbours damnation, and object to it, refusing your consent : or you must be willing to be damned, there being the same reason and necessity for it, as there is that your neighbour should be thus punished, who deserves it no more than you. Nothing but an unreasonable selfishness, and disregard to your neighbours welfare, can make

you object to your own damnation, and consent to his.

SEMI. I confess I see no way out, and have nothing to reply to this at present. But I have one thing to say that will prove your arguments must be defective some where though I do not see it at present. For the damned will be perfectly wicked and enemies to God forever; and it cannot be right to be willing to be abandoned to sin and enmity against God, and blaspheme his name forever. Therefore no man ought to be willing to be damned, unless he ought to be willing to be God's enemy, and like the devil forever; to assert which would be shocking, and no man surely can believe it.

CALV. This, I confess is a plausible objection, and has so much seeming weight in it, that no wonder it should appear to many, at the first view at least, insuperable and unanswerable. But since it seems to be proved, beyond contradiction, by what has been said above, that a man ought to be willing to be damned, on the suppositions which have been made; and it is impossible that two contradictory propositions should be both true; we must not admit this objection to be unanswerable, without carefully reviewing and examining it. And if, upon examination, it shall appear to be without foundation, and contrary to the truth, what has been before proved, will be yet more confirmed.

You have granted, and all must grant, that

we ought to be willing that some of our fellow men should be abandoned to sin and ruin, and be confirmed enemies to God forever : And it is plain that to acquiesce in this is so far from being a friend to sin, or sinful, or implying any enmity against God in our hearts, that thus to consent to it, because it is the revealed will of God, for his own glory and the general good, is an exercise of love to God, and his law ; and of benevolence to being in general : And not to be willing, in this case, and to refuse cordially to consent to it, would be rebellion against God. So that there is no other way for us, not to turn enemies to God ourselves, but to be willing that some of our fellow men should be enemies to him forever. And why must not this be just as true in our own case, or supposing it is most for God's glory and the general good that we should be given up to eternal enmity against God ; and therefore, God hath determined we should be thus given up, and sent to hell, with others ? Not to consent to it, on this supposition, would be an act of enmity against God and to be an enemy to him : But to consent to it, and be willing that God's will should be done, for his own glory and the general good, would be so far from being friends to sin, that it would be an exercise of love and friendship to God, and benevolence to being in general. And so long as we continue willing to be ourselves with others, abandoned to sin and ruin forever, for the reasons

and ends mentioned, we shall not, we cannot be enemies to God or friends to sin, for this implies a plain contradiction : But as soon as we cease to be willing to be thus given up to sin, we are given up, and turned enemies to God and all good : And the evil never can come upon us until we withdraw our submission, and refuse to acquiesce in the will of God. Hence it appears that all the foregoing reasons to prove that we ought to be willing to be damned, if this be the will of God, and for his glory and the general good, stand good, and equally prove that we ought to consent to this, on this supposition ; even though damnation includes a being given up to sin and enmity against God forever.

Perhaps this point may be farther illustrated, and set in a more convincing light to some, by the instance of the angels, who were all created perfectly holy. It was best, on the whole, most for God's glory and the general good, that vast numbers of them, should rebel and continue in sin and ruin forever : And therefore it was God's will that this should take place. Suppose this had been revealed to them, when they were all perfectly holy, and each one could not know but he was the person, who among others was to be given up to sin and destruction ; for the glory of God, and the good of the whole. How ought they to have felt on such an occasion ? They must all consent to the will of Jehovah, and say " let it take place however many of us ;

or whoever of us, must fall into this sinful ruined state, or whatever becomes of us." If they did not thus willingly submit to the will of Jehovah, they would by that, turn enemies to him, and fall into that very state, and bring that evil upon themselves, which they opposed, or to which they refused to submit for the glory of God, and the general good. But so long as they had such a supreme regard for the will of God, his glory and the general good as to say, "thy will be done, let what will come upon us," they would be secure from the evil; and this would be the only way to avoid it. So long as they all continued of this disposition, they continued happy and holy. They, who fell into a state of endless sin and woe, did it by giving up such a disposition and indulging a contrary one; and they who continue holy and happy, do continue and persevere in this state and character, by persevering in a submission to the will of God, and such a regard for his glory and the general good, that they are willing to be given up to eternal sin and ruin, if this were necessary to answer these ends, or if they could not remain in this holy and happy state, consistently with God's glory, and the greatest good of the whole.

In a word, God thought it best, and therefore was willing that great numbers of angels should become sinful and miserable forever; and all the angels before any of them fell, were like God in their disposition, and choice, and there-

fore were disposed to acquiesce in his will and choice, when made known to them. Consequently had God's will been discovered with respect to this, they would all have acquiesced in it, so long as they were holy as God is holy. And if any one should feel the least reluctance to it even though he knew he was one that was to fall into sin and ruin, he would by that reluctance and opposition of heart to God's will, be an enemy to God, and fall into ruin. And none could fall into that state, in any possible way, but by opposing God's will or by being *unwilling* that his will should be done.

SEMI. This is more puzzling yet. You carry us away to the angels, concerning whom we know but little; I choose to keep nearer home, and mind my own business.

CALV. If you are determined not to *think*, and will not range into any quarter of the universe, to get light, you will remain in darkness, and always be *puzzled*, with a thousand things, while a child of fourteen years old, who has a right taste and disposition, and improves his understanding, as he ought, will be at no loss about them; but will see them in the light of demonstration.

Your last objection was, that for a man to be willing to be a confirmed enemy to God, if necessary for the glory of God and the general good, would be a sinful volition; and therefore he ought not to be willing. I have undertaken to

shew, that this is so far from being true, that *not to be willing*, in the case proposed, as to oppose this, would be a sinful volition; and there is no other way, in order to avoid sin, but to be willing, in this case, it being necessary to answer these ends, to be cast off into a state of perfect wickedness and ruin. And I think what has been said amounts to a clear demonstration, and wish you to review it with calmness and attention, and shew, if you can, where the argument fails, or else yield to the force of it, and think of it until it becomes easy and familiar to you.

SEMI. Your reasonings on the subject seem to be clear and conclusive, I confess. At least, I see no way at present to confute them. But I do not choose to have this matter settled by metaphysical reasoning only. I want *scripture* proof and evidence; for when we go by this, we are on sure ground. I observe you have made but little use of the bible in your arguing on this point; from which I concluded you can find little to your purpose in that.

CALV. I have aimed to keep the scripture in view in all I have said on this subject, and think I have made what is there revealed, the foundation of all my reasonings and arguments on the points; and, that I have been, through the whole of our conversation, "reasoning with you out of the scriptures." From the scriptures we learn that the glory of God ought to be our ultimate and highest end: that we are command-

ed to seek his glory in all we do ; and therefore are forbid to desire or pursue any thing which is contrary to his highest glory ; and required to submit to any thing and desire it may take place, which is most for his glory. . Therefore, on supposition it be most for his glory that I should not be saved but lost : I ought to submit, and not desire to be saved.

Again, the scripture teaches us that we ought to be all submission to the will of God, and always to be disposed to say from the heart, “not my will, but thine be done.” Therefore on supposition it is the will of God to cast me off, I must say heartily, “thy will be done.” Not to say and feel so, is to rise in rebellion against God.

Moreover, the scripture requires us to love our neighbours as ourselves. If I do so, and am willing God should cast any of my fellow men into hell forever, for his own glory and the general good, which I must be, unless I rebel against his revealed will ; then I must be willing to be cast off myself, if this be necessary to answer the same ends.

These are the reasons and arguments by which I have endeavoured to prove what I have advanced : And is not this arguing from scripture ? All those passages of scripture which teach us to make the glory of God our supreme end—To be all submission to his will, without making any exception, and to love our neighbour as ourselves, all which it is difficult and

needless to mention, do prove and really assert the doctrine I have affirmed.

Besides, I have introduced the express words of Paul, strongly expressing this to be his wish and desire with respect to himself, might this be the means of saving his brethren.

The words of Eli express the same sentiment, 1 Sam. iii. 18. "It is the Lord; *let him do what seemeth him good.*" This he says with respect to God's awful threatening, "That he would judge his house forever, and that he had sworn that the iniquity of Eli's house should not be purged with sacrifice nor offerings forever. And does not David express the same thing when he says, 2 Samuel xv. 26. "But if he thus say, *I have no pleasure in thee*: behold, here am I, let him do to me, as seemeth good unto him." Does he not resign his whole interest, temporal and eternal, to God's pleasure, without making any condition? If he say, *I have no pleasure in thee*, is not this to cast him off forever? "Behold, here I am, *let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.*" How could he express this sentiment in plainer and more strong language?

SEMI. But what advantage will this be to me, or any one else? If it be true, I see not that it is a point worth contending about, or what will be the benefit of understanding and believing it.

CALV. I may ask you, sir, what benefit there is in opposing it, if it be not true? It is represented as a very hurtful and wicked doctrine;

and if I am not mistaken, you considered it in this light, in the beginning of our conversation upon the subject. In this view, you thought it of importance to oppose it. And if it be true, the contrary error must be as wicked and hurtful, as this would be, were it not true. The truth will bear examination, and ought not to be given up, because some do not understand it, and do oppose it. It certainly can do no one any hurt to believe it; but may be of great service, if rightly improved; and the contrary error, I believe to be of a very bad tendency. Suffer me to illustrate this, in a few words—

A denial of this truth, and most of the arguments to support such denial, do misrepresent the nature of disinterested benevolence, and are really a denial of the existence, of any such thing: And it is supposed that selfishness is justifiable, and not opposed by real christianity; but that christians are warranted to act, and must act from selfish principles. This, I think, is evident, from what has been said on this subject, and most of the objections you have made. This tends to give a wrong idea of true religion, and to encourage professed christians in the indulgence of a selfish spirit; and to think themselves christians, while their feelings and exercises, are in direct opposition to true christianity: And this way of thinking, as I think, discovers a contractedness of mind, so it tends to contract it more and more, and to sink it down to a

narrow and low way of thinking and acting, contrary to that enlargedness of mind, and nobleness of soul, with which real christianity inspires, and which is implied in disinterested benevolence.

And it is implicitly a denial of the eternal damnation of any of mankind. For, as has been observed, if we love our neighbour as ourselves, which is necessarily implied in true holiness, and we are unwilling to be damned ourselves, when this is necessary to answer the same ends, to answer which they are damned; then we cannot acquiesce in their damnation; nor ought any in heaven or earth to be willing that there should be any such thing as damnation. Consequently, there can be no such thing, consistently with the inclination of any holy being. But if this unwillingness to be damned ourselves, when this is as necessary for the glory of God and the general good, as that any of our fellow men should be damned, is owing to selfishness, and an exercise of that affection which is contrary to loving God supremely, and our neighbour as ourselves; then this justifies selfishness, as has been observed, and justifies the christian in avowing it, as a good and holy principle; by which he is willing others should suffer *that* for the glory of God, which he is not willing to suffer were it necessary to answer the same end: And, in short, cares not what becomes of his fellow men, or of God's honour, if he can but be safe

and happy. Surely that doctrine which embraces and supports one of these alternatives, and does really avow the latter, and justifies all the selfishness in the world, and supposes there is no such thing as disinterested benevolence, is a very dangerous and hurtful doctrine, and tends to root all true religion out of the world.

On the other hand, the doctrine which I have endeavoured to explain and vindicate, tends to the advantage of christians many ways, which advantages naturally come into view, by attending to what has been said, of the evil consequences of the opposite doctrine.

It is suited to enlarge the mind of the christian, and to extend his ideas and thoughts to objects which are great and immense, and to wake up the feelings and exercises of disinterested benevolence, of supreme love to God, and regard to the general good, which swallows up and forgets his own personal interest, as nothing, in comparison with these grand objects. This will help him, in the best and easiest manner to distinguish between true religion and false: and to obtain, and maintain the evidence in his own mind, that he is a friend to God, and has that benevolence in which holiness does summarily consist.

This will prepare him to acquiesce in the eternal destruction of those who perish, and even to rejoice in it, as necessary for the glory of God, and the greatest good of the whole, in

the exercise of that disinterested benevolence, which makes him to be willing to be one of that sinful, wretched number, were this necessary to answer these ends.

This will prevent his preaching, or talking in that *selfish* way about religion; which too many ministers, and others do; or indulging selfish affections, under the notion of their being the exercise of true religion.

A belief of this doctrine, and exercises answerable, will bring and keep in view, true, unreserved *resignation to the will of God*. And prevent his deceiving himself, with an imagined resignation which is not true resignation, but the exercise of wicked selfishness, and impiety; and with which many are deceiving themselves. For instance, when a parent loses a dear and only child, he is resigned, and willing his child should be taken from him by death, if *God will make it happy forever*. This condition spoils the resignation, and it expresses no true regard to God, but only a regard to his child: which the most selfish parent has, as well as the most benevolent. So one who thinks himself a christian, is willing to be poor and despised, to be sick and suffer great pain, if *it may work for his good, and God will make him eternally happy at last*; and thinks this true resignation, and that in a high and uncommon degree. Whereas this is not real resignation to the will of God, and expresses nothing but selfishness, in making God

a tool to answer our own selfish ends. He will consent that God should make him happy, and answer his ends, and is willing to be in his hands on no other condition. This expresses no true regard to God, or the general good. To conclude, the christian who believes this truth, and has feelings and exercises answerable to it, with pleasure gives himself into the hands of God, and rejoices that he and all things are in his hands, and that he will glorify himself by all men either in their salvation or damnation, and says, to God, "if it be most for thy glory that I should be cast off, thy will be done, "Father glorify thy name." I have no condition to make, let God be glorified, and his kingdom be most happy and glorious, whatever becomes of me." And the stronger and more clear these exercises are, the greater evidence he will have, when he reflects upon them; that he is a true friend to God, and that it is most for his glory, and for the greatest general good, that he should be perfectly holy and happy in his kingdom forever.

END OF THE DIALOGUE.

James Smith

RELIGIOUS MATTERS

PROTESTANT CHURCHES

THE ... OF ...

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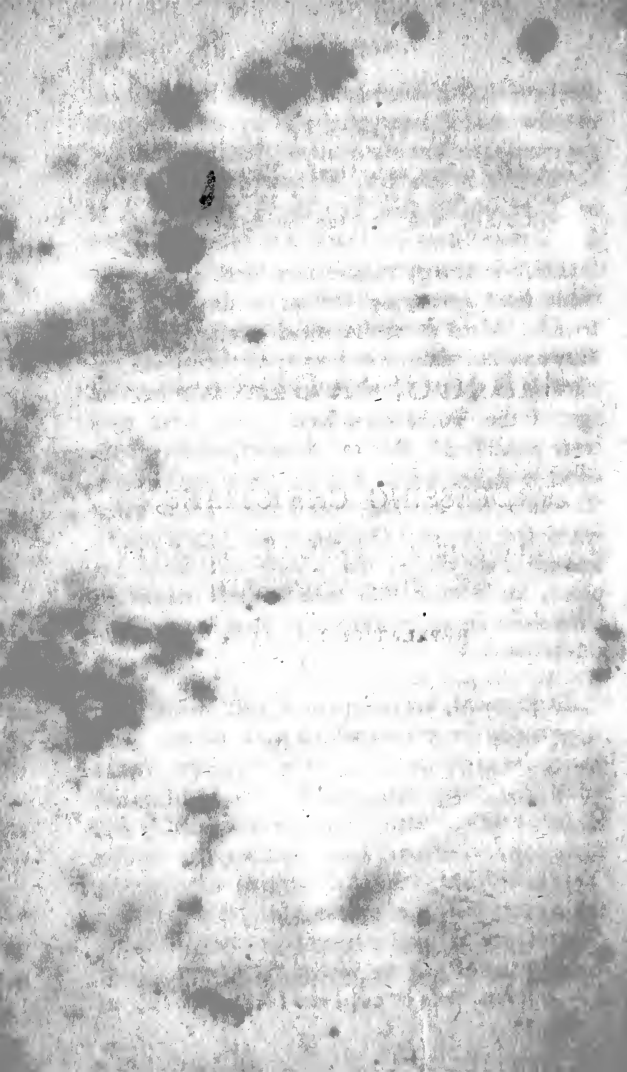
SERIOUS ADDRESS,

TO

PROFESSING CHRISTIANS,

IN THE NAME, AND FROM THE WORDS OF
JESUS CHRIST, RECORDED

REVELATION xvi. 15.



“ Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.”

THE warning, exhortation and encouragement here given, by Christ, to his professed friends, suited to excite them to attend to their duty and faithfulness to him at all times, are applicable to them in whatever circumstances and age of the world they have lived, since they were published : But are more especially applicable to those, who live in the time and circumstances to which the words have a particular reference. In order to know what time this is, and what are the events which will then take place, the context with which these words are connected must be carefully attended to, and understood.

These words are spoken by Christ, while John is narrating the events which were to take place under the sixth vial while it was running. In the midst of his narration, or before he had finished it, he is interrupted, and Jesus Christ speaks these remarkable and important words ; so that they immediately respect the events contained in the scene which was opening to John. In this chapter we have an account of the preceding vials by the angels to whom they were given. These seven vials or cups are said to be full of

the wrath of God, and to contain the seven last plagues or remarkable judgments, which were to be inflicted chiefly on the beast and his adherents; that is, the Pope and the hierarchy of the church of Rome, his supporters and followers. He was to continue one thousand, two hundred and sixty years, and these vials contained the several successive calamities and judgments, the effects of the divine wrath, which were to be inflicted on him and his adherents during his continuance; which, in the events under the last vial, shall complete his utter destruction. If the time of the running of these seven vials, be computed to take up or comprehend one thousand, two hundred and sixty years, the time in which the beast is to continue, each vial will take up less than two hundred years. But nothing appears to confine the time of each vial to the same number of years. Some of the vials may comprehend more, or fewer years than others, according to the longer or shorter continuance of the calamitous events, which they represent and predict. This can be determined best by the time and duration of the events, which have come to pass, and were predicted under the vials which have been poured out. A number of able expositors who have carefully consulted the most learned, and credible historians who lived in those times, have made it evident, that the events predicted under the first four vials took place before the reformation from popery by Luther

and Calvin, which began near the beginning of the sixteenth century. "The fifth vial was poured out on the seat (throne) of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness, and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds." When the reformers arose and declared the pope to be anti-christ, and forsook the church of Rome as not the true, but an anti-christian church, the mother of harlots, many became their followers, and embraced their doctrines. Men in high office, who had great power and influence, joined with the reformers and protected them, and a number of nations and kingdoms renounced the pope and his authority. By this his throne, his power and influence, which had been very high, great and universal, were greatly contracted and weakened, and threatened with annihilation. This greatly alarmed the pope and his party, and they exerted all their power, policy and cunning to suppress it, and destroy the chief promoters of it. And the emperor of Germany was excited and persuaded, with all his power and the forces which could be raised, to make war on the protestants; but he was defeated, and great numbers of his followers were destroyed: And he relinquished his crown and office and shut himself up in a cloister, and spent the remainder of his days in dejection and a painful melancholy and gloom.

And various other methods were taken by them to destroy the protestants, and put an end to the reformation, for more than a century; but they were continually defeated, and all the policy and craft, by which they had prospered, and by which the pope had been exalted to universal dominion, now failed them, and they were involved in political darkness, and the painful gloom of disappointment and defeat. These were wounds and sores which gave them unspeakable anguish and pain, and could not be healed.

And they repented not of their deeds, and opposed all reformation in doctrine and practice. They called a council of many bishops and inferior clergy under a pretence of healing matters, which sat eighteen years; but were so far from doing any thing towards a reformation, that they decreed a number of things which were still more blasphemous of God and divine truth. This vial was running till near the end of the seventeenth century.

The sixth vial probably begun to be poured out at the latter end of the seventeenth century or at the beginning of the eighteenth, and has been running all the last century, is running now, and will continue to run to the middle of the present, if not longer. Some of the events, which were to take place under this vial, are described in the following words. "And the

sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates ; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared." In order to understand these metaphorical, typical words, it must be observed, that ancient Babylon, which was an enemy to the visible people of God, and persecuted and destroyed many of them, and subjected the remainder to a state of grievous captivity for seventy years, until it was taken by the eastern kings of the Medes and Persians, was a type of the antichristian church of Rome. Therefore this church with its appendages is repeatedly called Babylon in this book of Revelations.

The great river Euphrates run through the midst of Babylon entering in on one side of it, and passing out on the other side under the walls ; and was a defence to the city, and by it they had a great supply of provision. Cyrus king of Persia, acting in conjunction with his uncle Darius king of the Medes, took the city by turning the water of the river into another channel, which prepared the way for his army to march in under the walls where the river used to run, and was now dried up : in this way they entered the city, slew the king and chief men, and took possession of it, which issued in its final destruction.

The prophecy before us has an allusion to this type and figurative representation in predicting the fall of spiritual Babylon, and the manner in which it was to be effected. By drying up the river Euphrates is meant the removal or diminution of whatever has been the great and chief support of the pope, and the church of which he is the head. And this chiefly consists in the strength and power which he has in various ways, and by different instruments, obtained, especially by the stream of money and riches which have been made, by various means, to flow into that church for many ages from all parts of christendom. This stream has been in a considerable measure dried up in the last century, by the nations withholding much of the money which used to flow into that church like a great river, and turning it into another channel. And the order and society of Jesuits, which has been a strong pillar and support of that church many ways, has been demolished and taken away in the last century. And what has been done in the latter part of that century in pulling down and impoverishing the pope and the church of Rome, by which it has fallen almost to the ground, is notorious to all.

By the kings of the East are meant all those, in whatever part of the world they live, and whoever they are, who are enemies to the spiritual Babylon, and seek to pull down and destroy it,

typified by the kings of the east, who fought against and subdued the ancient, literal Babylon.

The late revolution in France, by which the church of Rome is again introduced there by an agreement between the chief consul and the pope, at a first and superficial view, may appear to be a revival of the cause of that church, and a step toward the pope's rising to his former height. But when the subject is carefully examined it will doubtless appear otherwise. The chief consul really claims, and has obtained the power in France, and in other states, over which he claims a jurisdiction, which the pope used to claim; and the latter is only made a tool by the former, to answer his own ambitious purposes. It may soon appear that this event was the only proper step to effect the utter ruin of the pope and of that church. Be that as it may, we are sure that this spiritual Babylon will fall to the ground under the vial which is now running, and the succeeding one, and that all the succeeding events will issue in its utter overthrow, though the particular steps which will be taken to effect this, cannot be known and described, as they are future, any farther than they are revealed in scripture prophecy.

There is a prophecy in the book of Daniel, which illustrates the case before us. In describing the fourth beast, which now consists of the

pope and the hierarchy of the church of Rome, he says, " And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixt with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men : But they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay."

This prophecy has doubtless been fulfilled in other instances, but is eminently so in the *concordate* between the chief consul of France and the pope, in which the latter attempts to unite with the seed of men, the men of the world, who are apparent infidels and real enemies to christianity, even as it consists in popery, unless when they can answer their own ends by it. By this the pope has not strengthened, but weakened his cause, and prepared the way to be dashed in pieces, by the stone cut out of the mountain without hands ; to be destroyed by Christ.

John goes on to relate what he further saw in vision as taking place under this sixth vial. " And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles (or doing wonders).

which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty." While the beast and the hierarchy of the false church of Rome, here called the false prophet, who is elsewhere described as the great harlot, sitting on the beast, who is the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth; while these are sinking and expiring, they, in conjunction with the old dragon, the devil, who had been the great invisible agent in setting them up and supporting them, and by whom they were always inspired, emit a filthy spawn, a most mischievous progeny, which are no other than the spirits of devils, which rush forth to the kings of the earth, and the inhabitants of the whole world, to corrupt the world, and promote all manner of wickedness in principle and practice, in rebellion against Christ and his gospel. And in doing this they will effect wonderful events, which were not expected, and never had been in such a manner and degree. By this they will arm mankind in general, especially those in the christian world, against God and the Redeemer, and unite and gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. The beast and harlot will live in these times, and not become extinct till this battle comes on.

This *gathering* to the battle, does not mean a local collection into one place; but a general

agreement among the nations, to oppose Jesus Christ and the gospel, in principle and practice, and thus arming themselves against God, by which they will be prepared for the battle, which will not consist in any particular combat with carnal weapons, between christians and those who oppose them : but in the judgments and destruction, which God will inflict on the open and incorrigible enemies of Christ and his church, by which they and their cause will be amply vindicated and avenged, and deserved wrath and vengeance will be inflicted on their enemies, to the uttermost. This battle will commence in the fulness of it when the seventh vial shall be poured out, when by the events which take place under the sixth vial : the body of the inhabitants of the world will be ripened for the punishment and vengeance by which they shall be destroyed ; which battle is described in the latter part of this, and the nineteenth chapters.

While these evil spirits are doing their work and are using all their influence to arm wicked men and unite them against Christ, he stands forth and speaks in the words now under consideration ; and certainly speaks them with reference to the events predicted in this vision, respecting this battle, and the events preparatory to it ; and therefore are spoken to those professing christians who live in these days, as a warning, direction and encouragement to them. And if

we live in the very time pointed out in this vision, it concerns us to know it, and earnestly attend to, and conscientiously improve these words of Christ, as the only way to be safe and blessed.

It becomes christians to discern and know the signs of the times in which they live : To attend to the events of divine providence compared with scripture ; with discerning and judgment to view the state of religion and morality in the world, so far as they are under advantages to extend their knowledge of these important concerns. And they have opportunity, which they ought diligently to improve, to compare the circumstances and particular events of the times, in which they live with the prophetic part of scripture, to find, if they can, with a degree of satisfaction and certainty, the agreement of the events which are before their eyes, with the predictions of scripture ; and, hereby learn what is their particular duty, and what is come and coming in the world, as it respects the moral corruption and consequent misery of mankind, and the depressed state of christianity, and the final victory it shall obtain.

That we live in the time when the sixth vial is poured out, which has been running during the last century, or longer, is evident from scripture prophecy, as has been observed, and is abundantly confirmed and rendered certain by the

events which have taken place in the last century, and are now coming to pass before our eyes; which were predicted under this vial. The river Euphrates, agreeable to the explication now given, has been drying up for many years, and the church of Rome is impoverished and weakened many ways, by which the way has been opened for her enemies, whoever and wherever they be, to assault and destroy her, and she has sunk in a manner which never took place before, as has been observed. And while this old harlot, who is the mother of all the abominations in the earth, who rides on the beast, supported by the old dragon the devil, is falling and expiring, they three, join to emit and send forth evil spirits like themselves, which must therefore be spirits of devils, which go forth to corrupt the world, so as to arm the people in general against God, in a state of open and high rebellion against the Redeemer. And is not all this now taking place, which began many years ago, and is now increasing in a remarkable and rapid progress? Let christians, who have discerning to know the times, attend and judge.

In the last century there has been a greater spread and prevalence of error, infidelity, and all kinds of immorality and wickedness, than was ever before known; and that in a manner and by means new and strange. Men of great abilities and learning have risen up champions

for infidelity, and consequently for vice and immorality. And secret societies have been formed and combined to do every thing in their power to put an end to christianity, and every institution that would lay any restraint on their lusts. To this end they spread their emissaries wherever there is a prospect of the gaining profelytes. They introduce themselves and their disciples as teachers of schools, and into colleges, and the courts of princes and kings, to profelyte as many of the great as they can. They have been detected, and their doctrines and schemes have been exposed to the public; but this has not discouraged them; and through the connivance of the great and obsequiousness of the multitude, they have gone on to practise and prosper. In their unwearied exertions and attempts they turned their attention particularly to France, and were so successful as to influence a great part of the leading men there, and a number in the kings court to embrace their principles and scheme, which produced a revolution in that nation, by which christianity and all the institutions of it were abolished, and infidelity introduced in the room of it: In the presence of the National Convention, a man of note arose and declared he was an atheist, that there was no God but liberty, &c. which gained the approbation and loud applause of the whole convention. And a number of priests appeared in the hall of the convention, and cast off the garments

and the badges of their sacerdotal office, and thus publicly in this contemptuous manner renounced christianity ; and in a literal sense and most expressly put off their christian garments themselves instead of keeping them. The leaders in this scheme, in their endeavours to overthrow christianity, espouse and propagate among their disciples this maxim, "that any means necessary or tending to promote a good end, cannot be wrong, but must be right and commendable." Hence, as they propose the total abolition of christianity, as necessary for the happiness of mankind and of their own, and therefore the highest and best end, they consider any means which they can practise, and in their view are suited to answer this end, to be right and laudable. Consequently, when the grossest hypocrisy, fraud, lying, cheating, murder, and even self-murder, or any vice which can be mentioned, are in their view necessary or needful to answer this end they are to be practised, without the least remorse of conscience. Therefore when they think it the best way for them to injure christianity, they will appear zealous advocates for it, and assert and deny any thing, however contrary to the truth, when they think it will answer their ends. There have been volumes written in Europe by men, whose learning, knowledge and veracity cannot be reasonably questioned, who have detected and abundantly proved these things, and many more gross immoralities to be practised and

promoted by the leaders in this iniquitous scheme to crush christianity.

While infidelity has spread in Europe, vice and gross immorality have kept pace with it. In France especially, these prevail to an extent and degree never known before. This is supported by the most credible testimony. And as far as their armies have carried their conquests, which have been rapid and extensive, they have spread the principles of infidelity, and the practice of immorality to a degree never known before since christianity was received by those nations. This is abundantly testified by the learned and pious in Europe. And multitudes of those, who do not professedly renounce christianity, embrace those doctrines which are so contrary to the gospel, as to lead to infidelity, and really are no better. While the multitude of common people are sunk into vice, carelessness about religion, and ignorance of the nature and true doctrines of it. Can any one who takes a proper and attentive view of all this, doubt that the evil spirits, the spirits of devils have been let loose with an extraordinary commission to corrupt mankind, especially the christian world, during the last century, and are still progressing, with uncommon power and rapidity, agreeable to the prophecy before us?

America has not escaped the fangs of those

unclean spirits of devils. There are traces and fruits of their operation, which must be strikingly visible to all who do not wilfully shut their eyes. There was indeed a remarkable and general attention to religion in America, particularly in New-England about the middle of the last century; and a number were hopefully converted. But a great part of the professed subjects of this revival were so imprudent and irregular in their conversation and conduct; and so many apostatized to error, irreligion and vice, that, on the whole it tended to strengthen the prejudices of many against religion, and was the means of leading many to infidelity, under the invisible influence of satan. Since that, infidelity, irreligion and vice have increased, but the first of these not so openly but in a great measure secretly and under cover. But in the latter part of the last century many European infidels were introduced to America, who disseminated their infidel principles by conversation, and spreading books written against divine revelation. One man in Europe wrote a pamphlet against the bible, which is reprinted and spread in America, and was read with avidity by multitudes, both youth and others; and gave a turn in their ignorant and already vitiated minds in favour of infidelity. And a number of books and pamphlets have been published against christianity, and in favour of deism and atheism which are spreading and highly approved by many. And societies

are formed composed of infidels, who are assiduous in doing all they can secretly, and by any means in their power, to discredit and root out christianity and all religion and morality. This is a wonderful and in some sense and degree a miraculous event. That in a christian land, where the body of the people were friendly to christianity there should be such a great and sudden change in favour of infidelity, and such great and unwearied exertions to promote it, in a manner and degree which never were experienced before in the christian world. It cannot be accounted for, but by supposing it to be produced by that invisible agency of evil spirits on the corrupt hearts of men, which is in the prophecy before us, predicted to take place at this time; and is a certain and undeniable evidence that this prophecy is now fulfilling; and is therefore a demonstration of the truth of christianity, which infidelity is attempting to destroy. And that though it may seem for a time to prevail, it, with the promoters of it, will soon and unexpectedly be destroyed, and christianity will revive, prosper and triumph.

It is proper to attend to some other things not only as a further evidence, if needed, that these spirits of devils are now among us, and producing great effects before our eyes; but that they are making rapid progress and have not yet finished, but have only begun their work. There

are a number of circumstances and events taking place favourable to the cause of infidelity and vice, and leading to the progress of these, which it is not prudent or needful particularly to mention ; which are in the full view of those christians who have their eyes open. There is an apparent general decay and neglect of religion among those who do not in words expressly renounce christianity, but think themselves friends to it. There is a prevailing indifference and carelessness about religion, and consequently ignorance of the nature and doctrines of it. The churches are generally small, by far the greater part of the people neglect to join them. And many, if not most of the members of churches are luke warm ; ignorant or erroneous, if not immoral ; and the discipline of most churches is very lax, if not wholly laid aside. The sabbath is neglected and profaned as it never was before, especially in New-England : and public worship is greatly neglected ; and family religion is generally and almost universally laid aside, and parental government, and religious education and instruction of their children and domestics, have almost wholly ceased. Consequently a general ignorance in religion, and the practice of vice take place. Some of the important truths of the gospel are neglected and opposed, and many errors imbibed, which really subvert the gospel, and have a direct and strong tendency to infidelity and atheism, as may, perhaps, be more particularly considered hereafter.

In this situation of affairs, public and private, there is a strong tendency to universal infidelity and atheism : and we are ripening fast for it. If God do not prevent ; to which mercy we have no claim : but rather are provoking him to give us up to the lusts of our hearts, to run on to the most gross infidelity, and all manner and degrees of vice and wickedness, which will introduce great temporal misery and wretchedness, and bring on utter and eternal destruction. And they who will keep their christian garments will suffer shame and reproach, and innumerable other evils, and it may be the most cruel death that evil men can invent and inflict.

All things will go fast on to this issue, unless prevented by the interposition of divine power and grace, which we are sure will not be done till mankind in general are resolutely and fully armed against Christ, prepared for the battle, and ripe for destruction, from the prophecy under consideration. How long time this is yet to take, none can with precision tell. It will continue till the sixth vial is expended, which, as has been observed, will yet run, most probably, for half a century, or more. But it is worthy observation, that the vials may not be so perfectly distinct, as to wholly run out before the next, in a measure, begins. Under the seventh vial the great battle which Jesus Christ will carry on against satan and a wicked world armed against

him, will come on in the full strength of it, and will continue, till by the expressions of the divine anger, in inflicting various and dreadful successive judgments, of which no particular, and full description can now be given; or any adequate idea be formed of them, till they shall take place, the obstinately wicked shall be destroyed and swept from off the earth, having drunk the dregs of this dreadful cup which is in the hand of the Lord, and wrung them out [Psalm lxxv. 8.] But some drops of this vial may fall upon the world, in some parts of it, before the time is come to pour it out without restraint or mixture, and before the events predicted under the sixth vial are finished, but while that vial is yet running. Sore calamities and awful destructions, may be inflicted in many places, and at different times, as a testimony of the displeasure of God with the wickedness of men, and a warning to the world of the greater calamities and certain destruction which are coming on mankind, unless they repent. The great and remarkable calamities which have been lately felt in France and other parts of Europe, while infidelity and wickedness have been increasing and spreading, may be considered to be of this kind, and as a warning to the world, and to the United States of America in particular. And as great, if not more dreadful judgments will doubtless be inflicted on these states before the sixth vial is ended, as a warning and call to repentance.

It is doubtless thought by some professing christians that the above representation of the state of religion, and the prospect with respect to it in America, is not just. There have been lately remarkable revivals of religion in many places and parts of the United States, and great numbers hopefully converted, and a number of deists have renounced their infidelity and become christians. And not a few men of judgment and observation have thought that religion is rather in a progressive state than otherwise.

Upon this it is observed, that there is reason of much thankfulness that there have been so many remarkable revivals of religion of late, and that such a number have been hopefully converted. But this number is presumed to be much less than the rest of the inhabitants of most, if not all, of the places where these revivals have taken place; and when compared with the number of inhabitants of these states it will appear that these converts bear but a very small proportion to the whole, and those which make the body of the people have in general received no benefit by these revivals, but the contrary: They are more hardened in impenitence, vice and infidelity; so that there may be and doubtless is an increase, on the whole, of infidelity and wickedness, notwithstanding these revivals. Jesus Christ will have and maintain his church in the midst of the greatest opposition to it, and in or-

der to this sinners must be converted, more or less, and raised up as witnesses to his truth and cause. And these revivals are a warning and loud call to all the people to repent, whether they will hear or not. In the mean time, there is no evidence that they will increase or continue.

It is also supposed by some that the cause of infidelity is rather on the decline in this nation, and that disbelievers now think more favourably of christianity than they did sometime ago, as they are less open, bold and noisy in opposition to it, than they were : and some of them speak in favour of it at times.

To this it may be replied, that such a change of disbelievers, in appearance and conduct, may not be the least evidence that they are really more friendly to the gospel, as a revelation from heaven, than they have been, or that their cause is on the decline and does not increase in strength and numbers. This may be in their view, the best way they can take to support their cause and carry on their scheme, and they will turn into any shape, and say any thing which they think will best answer this end, as has been observed. Besides, in the political contest which now subsists in the United States, in both parties of which there are doubtless disbelievers in divine revelation, there are a variety of circumstances, which need not be mentioned, which do operate as a

restraint upon infidels in different ways who are on either side to produce the effect mentioned, consistently with their being as much engaged as ever in the cause of infidelity, and their prospect of success.

The foregoing has been designed to point out the signs of this time, and to show that the Saviour has particular reference to the events which are now taking place before our eyes, and others which are soon to follow, in his words under consideration ; and that, therefore, they are spoken, in a particular and special manner to those professed christians, who are now on the stage of life, and to all of this denomination who shall live before the seventh vial shall be poured out.

The following will consist in an explanation of these words, and a practical improvement of them, suited to excite the attention of all professed friends of christianity to the warning, threat, command, encouragement and promise contained in them, and to induce them to regard and practise what is here recommended by the glorious head of the church as the only way to safety and happiness.

“ Behold, I come as a thief.” . This is introduced with a note of attention. Behold ! This denotes that what Christ is going to speak is of

great importance, and demands the serious and close attention of all who have ears to hear. The coming of Christ is often spoken of in scripture, and intends various and different times and manners of his coming; and he is often said to come as a thief, to denote not the end of his coming, but the circumstances and manner of his coming. The thief comes to do mischief and steal. Christ comes to accomplish the wisest and best ends. And though he often comes in judgment, to inflict evil, yet he never injures any, and he always designs kindness and mercy to his church. But he comes as a thief, that is unperceived, and while his coming is not thought of by the men of the world, and by all who are spiritually asleep whether professing christians or not. His coming is perceived and realized by none but those who are awake and on the watch.

The coming of Christ here seems to comprehend two events which are nearly connected together, and in some sense one, viz. the gathering of the people to the battle by the influence of evil spirits; and his coming to the battle, and carrying it on till it is finished. Christ really comes by and with his enemies, when they rise, oppose and attempt to destroy his church. He superintends and directs the whole, and his hand and presence is to be seen in all the transactions and events which are accomplished by wicked

agents, whether visible or invisible. This is intimated in the words immediately following. "And *he* gathered them together into a place, called in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon." *He*, that is Christ, gathered them together. This is said to denote the superintendance and agency of Christ in gathering them together, while men and devils are active in producing the same event. Thus when the king of Assyria gathered a great army together with an intent to invade and lay waste the land of Judah and Jerusalem, God says he sent him to accomplish his purpose; and that the king and his army were in his hand, and under his influence and direction, as much as the saw and ax are in the hand of the workman. And when the false prophets were deceived, and flattered Ahab that he should prosper in going to war, in which his army was conquered, and he lost his own life, it is said the Lord put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these false prophets. So Christ is said to come with the Romans when they gathered their army to destroy Jerusalem.

Jesus Christ is therefore now come and coming in all the remarkable, unexpected wonderful events which are taking place under the sixth vial, by the agency of men and devils. He superintends and directs the whole until all things are prepared for the battle of the great day of God Almighty, and he has gathered together the

army of his enemies. Then he will come to battle, and destroy his enemies, and deliver his church, and cause it to prosper as it never has done before. But in all this coming of Christ none will be properly sensible of it or prepared for it but those who are awake, watch and keep their garments, to the rest he comes as a thief.

“Blessed is he that watcheth.” When he that watcheth, &c. is pronounced *blessed* it supposes that none who are not of this character are blessed, but the contrary; to watch, in the sense of the text, is to be spiritually awake, to look inward, and view their own motions and moral exercises, and on their outward conduct to learn on whose side they are; and to look round and discern the state and condition of the cause of Christ in the world; what is the moral state of the world, what the enemies to christianity are doing; what is their apparent strength, and success in their cause; and what appears to have come to pass, and to be soon coming, from divine prophecy; and to be concerned to be in readiness to do all they can, and whatever they are called to do for the cause of Christ, and in opposition to that of his enemies.

“Blessed is he that keepeth his garments.” This seems to be an allusion to a soldier set on the watch in the time of war and danger, when the army to which he belongs is surrounded, and

threatened to be invaded and conquered by a host of enemies. His duty is to continue awake, and observe the motion of the enemy, &c. If he put off the livery of a foldier, and lie down to sleep, he may be surprized by the enemy and obliged to run away naked, or will fall into the hands of his foes and be carried off by them. In the spiritual warfare, in which every christian is engaged, every one must be continually on the watch, and keep on him the livery of a christian foldier, and never on any occasion put these garments off and lay them aside. Watching and keeping his garments imply each other, and cannot be separated. He who doth watch keepeth his garments, and he who keepeth his garments, watcheth.

The garments of a christian, by which he is distinguished from all others, and are the christian livery, consist in the knowledge and practice of *the truth*, in which he "puts on Christ," and is conformed to him in heart and conduct, wherein he has set an example to be imitated, and embraces the truth, the doctrines he taught, and commands he has enjoined, both in the exercises of his heart and in his conversation and conduct. This is to be clothed with every christian grace and virtue, of which a very important one is humility. The whole is comprehended in *love*, in putting on charity, that is love, and walking in love. This comprises the whole of the chris-

tian character, and the garments with which he is clothed. None but true christians, as has been observed do put on these garments in reality ; but many others do put them on by profession and in appearance in the sight of men. The latter often in times of temptation do not keep their garments ; but fall from their profession or apostatize in conduct so as to discover their shame. And real christians are in such danger of losing their garments, that it is necessary for them to watch and exert themselves to keep them, lest they should walk naked, &c.

But it is of importance that these christian garments should be more particularly described, and to show how they may be kept, and what is necessary to do it, and in what ways they may be soiled, or put off and lost. The christian has put on Jesus Christ, he is clothed with him, by imbibing the same spirit that is in him ; by sincere and ardent love to him, union and constant, and close adherence to him and trust in him for all he wants ; a cordial, strong devotedness to him, his service, interest and cause, as the great and only interest worthy to be sought and pursued, in which his heart is principally engaged and swallowed up. Consequently, whatever is contrary to, and opposes the honour and interest of his dear Lord and Master, he is quick to discern ; and he most sensibly feels it, and is disposed to oppose it in all proper ways, whatever he must

be led to sacrifice for it, not excepting his own life. All this is necessary for a christian to keep his garments. Jesus Christ has expressly asserted this. He who is only a visible, professing christian, is not thus a friend to Christ, and really cares nothing about his honour or interest, and may really put off the garments of a christian and betray the cause of Christ, while, through his insensibility, and want of love to Christ and his cause, or a contrary disposition, he is wholly insensible of it. And when he cannot continue his christian profession without endangering his life, or in some way hurting his temporal interest, he will part with this visible christian garment, or do that which is equivalent.

This love, without which there can be really no part of these christian garments, also, carries in the nature of it a peculiar and strong union to the friends of Christ, as they are clothed with the same garments, *love*, in all its branches, and with one heart and soul engaged in the same cause. When a professed christian walks disorderly and is the cause of strife and contention in the church, he does not keep his garments, but so far puts them off. Hence the ground and necessity of christian discipline, in the exercise of this love; in the total neglect of which christians do not keep, but sully and lose their garments. And the christian cannot wear or keep his garments without exercising benevolence to his fel-

low men, in general, by doing good to all men as he has opportunity.

In order to have a still more clear and full idea of the garments, and how he may keep or loose them, they must be considered as they consist in the armour by which he defends himself, maintains his ground, and obtains the victory, in his warfare with his enemies. In this view the clothing necessary for a christian as a foldier of Christ and engaged in a warfare under him, in which situation he is considered in the words before us must be put on. This clothing is often mentioned in scripture ; but most particularly described by the apostle Paul in the conclusion of his letter to the church at Ephesus. Which ought to be often read, understood and committed to memory, by every christian. After describing the vast number, subtilty and power of their invisible, spiritual enemies, he calls upon christians to arm themselves, " to put on the whole armour of God," in order to withstand these enemies, " in the evil day." The apostles and primitive christians lived in an evil day, and all the days of christians in every age since have been evil in a sence and degree greater or less. They had the devil, and all the men whom he is allowed to influence and stir up to hate and persecute them, to oppose. But the time in which we live, and is yet coming on, is in a peculiar sence and degree evil, as these evil spirits have a

particular and large commission to go forth, and by their influence to stir up men in general, at least in the christian world, in zealous and strong attempts against Christ, and to destroy christianity and the church. And to what lengths they will be permitted to proceed, and what particular deeds, in their seeking to destroy christians, they will be suffered to do, at present none can certainly know. It is enough for us to know that they will do what God has designed they shall, and proceed till they have filled the measure of their iniquity, and are completely ripe, and fitted for the destruction which shall come upon them in the battle of that great day; and that *they* are and shall be blessed who watch and keep their garments, having put on the whole armour of God. Since all this is true, there is a particular and loud call to all professed christians to put on this armour, and be prepared for whatever is coming even the worst, however sudden and unexpected it may come; and be unseen and not thought of, till sudden destruction come upon them and they shall not escape.

Let christians then stand, having their loins girt about with *truth*. By truth is meant that scheme and plan of important, consistent connected truth revealed in the bible. This is often denominated *the truth* in distinction from all error, and every scheme of doctrine which men have invented, or may or can invent, which

though they may contain some things which are true; yet there is so much error and falsehood mixed with it, as to spoil the whole, and render it wholly inconsistent and ruinous. In opposition to this, the doctrines of revelation are called *the truth*, pure, important, saving truth, without any the least mixture of error. They who know and embrace *this truth*, and not any others, are and shall be saved. They only love the truth, walk in the truth, and by love are united to all who appear to know, love the truth, and walk in it. This is the truth of which Jesus Christ speaks when he says to Pilate, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto *the truth*."

The apostle represents this truth by a girdle, by which a man girds himself and ties up his loose garments, by which he is fitted for action. The girdle was then considered as an essential part of clothing; especially for those who were engaged in warfare. And in the case before us fitly represents the truth, by which the christian is strengthened, and all his garments are made tight, without which he cannot take one step. A proper girdle, to answer the end for strength and ornament, must consist of one sort of materials, strongly united together into one belt or string, without any chasm or weak place, by which it may become two, or fall into parts. So the truth by which the christian is girded is,

perfectly connected together. The whole makes but one girdle ; and one part cannot be taken out without spoiling the whole. If it be considered as composed of several links, all harmonious, and of one and the same sort strongly connected and implying and depending upon each other ; if one of the links be marred or broken and taken out, the girdle is marred and spoiled, and is not fit or capable of girding the loins of a christian. If one essential truth of the gospel which is comprehended in *the truth*, be denied or left out of the christian's creed, it is not a christian girdle, but like the girdle which the prophet Jeremiah hid in a hole in a rock by Euphrates, it is marred and good for nothing.*

* Numbers will say, " Many often speak of *essential doctrines* ; but it has never yet been determined and agreed what these essential doctrines are ; so that to speak of essential truths, leaves the matter as vague and uncertain as ever ; for none can tell, and christians cannot agree to say what they are."

Answer. It may be asked, who they are who make this objection, and talk after this manner ? Are they those who give proper and good evidence that they are born again of the spirit of God and of truth ? Do they appear to have that holy love which they only exercise who are born of God, and by which alone they know God ? The apostle John says, " he that knoweth God heareth us ; he that is not of God heareth not us." 1 John iv. 6, 7, 8. And Christ says, the same, " To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto *the truth*. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." John xviii. 37. They who are not of this character, but of the contrary, do not hear the voice of Christ, or the words of the apostles. They know not God, " They receive not the things of the spirit of God : for they are foolishness unto them ; neither can they know them, because they are spirit-

The apostle adds, "and having on the breast-plate of righteousness." Here by righteousness is meant true holiness or uprightness of heart by which the christian is guarded and fortified against the assaults of satan. This is indeed implied in having his loins girt about with truth, as every part of armour here mentioned is implied in the other, and each one really implies the whole, for one cannot be put on without the other. It

usually discerned." 1 Cor. ii. 14. They hate the truth, and will not come to it. John iii. 19, 20. No wonder that such are in the dark and cannot tell what is essential truth, or what is the truth.

But there have been thousands and millions who being born again have come to the knowledge of the truth, and have been united in embracing the truth, and in what are the essential truths of the gospel. And there have been and are innumerable christian churches, who agree in a creed which they believe and are sure contains the essential truths contained in divine revelation. Which are, in substance, the following.

That there is one God possessing all possible perfections, both natural and moral, which are infinite and unchangeable: consequently he is unchangeable in his will and designs or decrees, by which all things from the greatest to the least which should take place were determined and fixed; and that perfectly consistent with the freedom of all moral agents.

That God subsists in a trinity of three, called in the scripture the Father, the Son, or the Word, and the Holy Spirit.

That mankind who were made upright have in consequence of the sin of Adam, fallen into a state of total moral depravity, being dead in trespasses and sin.

That God has determined to save some, not all of mankind, whom he has chosen out of the rest and given them to the Son to be saved by him. That Christ the Saviour is God manifest in the flesh, and has by his suffering, and obedience made atonement for sin, and obtained that merit and right-

is a *whole* armour : It all hangs together, as one whole. The breast-plate of righteousness joined with the loins girded with truth, distinguishes the latter from that which is spurious and false. The apostle had spoken of those who "hold the truth in *unrighteousness*." He here speaks of directly the contrary, holding the truth in *righteousness* ; which is, receiving it into an honest and good heart. Men may hold the truth in some part of it, if not the whole, in speculation, while their hearts are neither good or honest, but hate and oppose it. This is to hold it in *unrighteousness*, as they do not put on the breast-plate of righteousness ; neither are their loins girt about with truth.

eousness, by which sinners may be pardoned, justified and saved consistently with the righteous law and government of God.—That the sinner who believes in Christ is justified, by the righteousness of Christ and not on account of any thing good and deserving in himself. That in order to believe on Christ, men must be born again by the spirit of God, which God of his sovereign grace effects in the hearts of the elect, who being justified by faith, shall persevere in holiness to eternal life —That the law of God requiring perfect obedience and holiness, is binding on all men both saints and sinners, which none attain to in this life.

That there will be a resurrection of all the bodies both of the just and unjust ; when all shall be judged by Christ, who will invite the former into his eternal kingdom, to be holy and happy forever ; and will sentence the latter to everlasting punishment.

There are many truths not expressed but implied in the above creed, and numerous things which may be called appendages to it, in the knowledge of which the attentive discerning christian, who embraces the foregoing fundamental doctrines, will make advances, as he grows in grace and in the knowledge of his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The truth, as it has been explained, is hated and opposed by Satan and all wicked men. The rulers of the darkness of this world, and all their followers hate this light, which is destructive to the kingdom of darkness, error and delusion, which is the kingdom of the devil; which none can successfully oppose, unless their loins are girded about with truth.

It might not be unprofitable to proceed to mention and explain the other parts of the christian armour specified by the apostle: But as this would swell this address beyond the proposed limits, it must be left to every serious christian to examine and meditate on the whole of this important passage. One particular, however, here mentioned must not be wholly passed over, which is *faith*, that faith which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen, which is represented as essential to the whole, and covering all the rest. This implies a firm and unshaken trust in the glorious head of the church, in his power, wisdom, goodness and truth; a hope and confidence that he will maintain his own cause, protect his church and friends, and lead them on to complete victory, and in the best time and manner defeat all his and their enemies, and turn all they have done or will do to his own advantage and the benefit of his church and kingdom. Were it not for this faith the christian must sink into a spirit of

despondency and heaviness ; but in the exercise of this he puts on the garment of praise and joy, however much and long Satan and wicked men may seem to succeed, prevail and prosper.

This subject will be concluded by a few cautions, directions, and motives to regard and obey these words of Christ, which are more applicable, and speak more directly to the professed christians of this generation and those which shall follow, than to any who have lived heretofore.

1. Be concerned to be awake. Do not sleep as others, but watch and be sober, lest this day should overtake you as a thief. Watch against every the least deviation from the way of truth and duty. Look round you and see what others and the world are doing, and maintain that love to Christ and concern for his honour and interest as shall produce a most lively and sensible feeling of every thing which is against him and his cause, and be ready to oppose it in all proper ways.

2. Take heed what doctrines you imbibe as true. Study the bible with care and constancy. Be concerned to know and embrace the whole truth, which you can see through from beginning to the end ; and though there be some things incomprehensible in it, yet you can see the whole to be perfectly consistent, and to form one

connected chain, which cannot be broken, and with which you may safely gird up your loins.

There are many errors embraced and propagated at this day, which are inconsistent with the connected chain of truth, which if consistently followed would land men in total infidelity and atheism. They who are asleep may be wholly insensible of this; but christians ought to be awake, able to discern and guard against such errors. It would take too much room to particularise here, and mention all the errors which have this tendency, and show that they will land all those who embrace, and consistently follow them, in the darkness of atheism. But it may be of importance to mention one, which indeed is connected with many others. It is this, that the doctrines of the gospel are of so little importance, that it is really no matter what men believe, if they do but live a moral life. It is easy to show that this is not only contrary to the whole bible, but really sets it aside, as no better than deism or atheism itself.

3. The world is a dangerous snare to christians at all times, especially in this time when satan is with power and subtilty tempting men to worldly-mindedness among other vices. So far as men are inclined to infidelity, and immorality in general they love the world, and the things of the world, and are eagerly pursuing the plea-

fures, profit and honors of it. And indeed this is the leading vice, and the parent of all the rest. Christians cannot give way to this, and keep their garments unspotted by it. Their faith, if true and exercised with proper strength, will overcome the world. They cannot serve God and mammon. All their concerns with the things of the world are subordinated to the honour and cause of Christ, and wholly devoted to this: and in their worldly business, they exercise as real religion in love to Christ and acting for him and his interest, as in any of their acts of piety and devotion. He who lays aside his religion for a week, day or one hour, that he may take care of and pursue his worldly concerns in any manner and shape whatever, is so far from keeping, that he puts off the christian garment. And if he returns one day in the week, or at any other time, when his temporal affairs will admit, to some attention to religion, and practice of it, he is so far from putting on the christian garments, that in the sight of him who has said, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon," it is nothing but deceit and mockery. Let christians beware of this, would they keep their garments in this evil time.

4. Take heed of engaging and acting in political and civil concerns so as to weaken or counteract the cause of christianity, or lose or abate your own religious exercises and zeal in the cause

of Christ. We live in a time when this caution is peculiarly proper and necessary ; when the public are greatly divided in their sentiments and conduct ; and disputes and political contention rise very high, and are carried on with great heat and animosity. This is in itself but a temporal, worldly matter, and comparatively of small importance, so far as the interest of Christ and christianity has no concern with it, and is not, in some respects involved in it ; which is not often the case. But when religion is connected with civil affairs, the christian feels interested in them ; but, as in all other worldly concerns, he subordinates them to this all important interest. He will therefore be on that side in politics, which in his best and most mature judgment will most promote the cause of Christ. And if he thinks his acting with either party will not tend to help this cause, he will sit still, and act on neither side. And if he thinks religion calls him to speak and act on one side, he will be calm and steady, and not join in the fierce contentions and unchristian words and actions of those of either party ; but condemn and reprove them. When professed christians are so engaged in politicks, as to subordinate the cause of religion to their political cause, and say and do that which tends to wound and sink christianity, or when the cause itself which they espouse has evidently this tendency, they do not keep, but put off their christian garments. Therefore let christians take heed to themselves in this point.

Should the body or majority of the people of a community or nation become so corrupt and careless about the interest of christianity, as to join with professed infidels in choosing rulers who were known to be real enemies to christianity, which may be in fact the case under the sixth vial, which is now running; could a christian in this case watch and keep his garments, and yet join with them to promote and carry on this business? And if this man should attempt to excuse and justify himself by saying that political matters and religion are entirely distinct and different things? therefore while he acts in the former and joins with those who are attempting to destroy the cause of the latter, he leaves the latter with a view to resume it, when he has answered his political ends; will not this make bad worse? Let the discerning christian who watches and keeps his garments, judge.

This particular will be concluded, by a quotation from Mr. Fuller, an English writer. In his preface to his book entitled "The gospel its own witness," he writes as follows. "One thing which has contributed to the advantage of infidelity is the height to which political disputes have arisen, and the degree in which they have interested the passions and prejudices of mankind. Those who favour the sentiments of a set of men in one thing, will be in danger of thinking favourably of them in others; at least they will not be apt to view them in so bad a light, as

if they had been advanced by persons of different sentiments in other things, as well as in religion. It is true, there may be nothing more friendly to infidelity in the *nature* of one political system than another; nevertheless it becomes those who think favourably of the political principles of infidels to take heed lest they be insensibly drawn away to think lightly of religion. All the nations of the earth, and all the disputes on the best or worst mode of government, compared with this, are less than nothing and vanity.

“To this it may be added, that the eagerness with which men engage in political disputes, take which side they may, is unfavourable to a zealous adherence to the gospel. Any mere worldly object, if it becomes the principal thing which occupies our thoughts and affections will weaken our attachment to religion: And if we once become cool and indifferent to this, we are in the high road to infidelity.”

This address will be concluded by suggesting motives to pay special attention to these words of Christ, and carefully obey them.

1. Jesus Christ speaks in these remarkable words particularly and most expressly to those who live in this day, as has been shown. Therefore to disregard them *now* will be highly and in a peculiar degree criminal and dangerous.

2. If you do not watch and keep your garments, consider the awful, the infinitely dreadful consequence. Christ will come upon you as a thief, and you shall not know what hour he will come. The consequence will be your suffering all evils of this day, and final and everlasting destruction.

3. Many and great evils are fast coming, on and are even at the door, in which the church will partake, and greatly suffer, even to a degree at present unknown. In the time of the prevalence of infidelity and immorality, and all kinds of vice which attend it, christians must suffer many ways, and endure great trials and temptations to turn aside and sin. And many calamities and divine judgments will take place before the sixth vial is ended, as a warning and anticipation of the battle which is coming on, as has been observed. In these, christians must suffer in a greater or less degree with others. And they will doubtless come suddenly and unexpected to all, who are not prepared to meet them by watching and keeping their garments.

And christians have no warrant to conclude, that persecution will not take place before the vial which is now running is out. And how soon and suddenly it will come on, none can tell. There is nothing in the volume of Revelation which intimates that the church shall be no more persecuted, and that to a degree beyond

any thing of the kind that has yet taken place. And there are some passages of scripture which seem to foretel the contrary, some of which will be here mentioned. The prophet Jeremiah speaks of the sufferings of Jacob, that is of the church of Christ, as peculiarly great in the time immediately previous to her deliverance and prosperity which Christ shall effect when he shall come to reign in the millennium. [Chap. xxx. 4—9.] “Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: *It is even the time of Jacob's trouble*; but he shall be saved out of it. For it shall come to pass *in that day*, saith the Lord of hosts that I will break his yoke from off thy neck, and will burst thy bonds, and strangers shall no more serve themselves of him. But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them.” By *David* Christ is meant. This expression is frequently used by the prophets to denote the reign of Christ in the millennium. The same we may understand as predicted, Dan. xii. 1. This is expressed by Zechariah [chap. xiv. 1, 2, 3.] “Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished, and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against these nations, as when he fought in the day of battle.”

Who can attentively read this passage with what follows, without perceiving that in this prediction there is reference to the same events which are foretold under the sixth and seventh vials in the Revelation? When it is said, "half of the city shall go forth into captivity," the meaning probably is, that the false professors in the church, which is meant by Jerusalem, shall, in the time of persecution, fall away and join the enemy. The rest who keep their garments shall be saved.

These passages of scripture, and others which might be mentioned, seem to indicate that the time of the greatest sufferings of the church is yet to come, and is fast approaching, and even at the door. There is nothing in the present state or disposition of mankind that is the least security against this, but much to the contrary. What has taken place in Europe the last century, and in a few years past, and is now progressing there, and even in America, is an evidence of this. Unbelievers, of whom there are many, think and say they have found out that christianity has been the source of most of the evils which mankind suffer : and they cannot be happy until christianity and christians are wholly suppressed and destroyed. Nothing can prevent their attempting this, by practising the most cruel and horrid persecution of christians that has ever yet been known, unless restrained from it by God, which there is no reason to expect,

but the contrary, from the prophecy in the Revelation, which has been considered, and those just now mentioned.

This may be necessary as a mean to purge the visible church of the many and great corruptions in doctrine and practice, which have been introduced and do continue; and to detect and exclude the many false professors: and to purify and render real christians more holy, and so prepared for that more perfect state which shall commence with the millennium. It is predicted, and probably respects this very time, that "many shall be purified and made white and tried." [Daniel xii. 10.] When Christ shall come in this way he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and who shall stand, when he appeareth? None but those who watch and keep their garments.

4. The sure and only way to be blessed, is to watch and keep your garments. This is the *only* way. This is implied in these words of Christ, as has been observed. And that it is a *sure* way, is as certain as it is that Christ himself spake these words. And it is implied that they shall be in a peculiar manner and degree blessed, who in this day of great temptation and suffering, are faithful to Christ, and persevere in adherence to him and his cause through great opposition and trials.

A
DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED AT

NEWPORT, RHODE-ISLAND,

AT THE FUNERAL OF THE

REV. SAMUEL HOPKINS, D. D.

Pastor of the first Congregational Church there.

WHO DIED ON THE

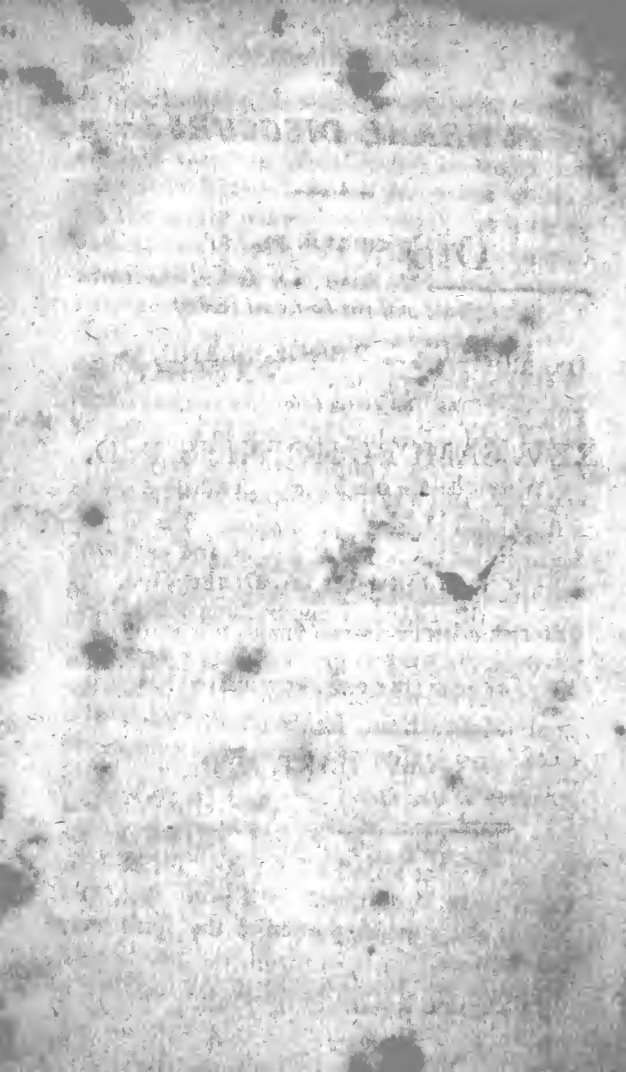
20th of December, A. D. 1803,

IN THE EIGHTY-THIRD YEAR OF HIS AGE,

AND SIXTIETH OF HIS MINISTRY.

BY LEVI HART, D. D.

PASTOR OF THE NORTH CHURCH IN PRESTON.



FUNERAL DISCOURSE.

2 KINGS ii. 12.

————— *My father, my father, the chariot
of Israel and the horsemen thereof!*

THIS pathetic exclamation was uttered by the prophet Elisha, when he saw his venerable teacher and guide ascending to glory in a chariot of fire. The prophet Elijah lived in a very degenerate age, and was commissioned to prophecy to a stupid and obstinate generation. Yet he persevered with inflexible resolution and unabating fidelity, in declaring the counsels of God, and warning the wicked of approaching destruction.

When advanced in life, he called Elisha to an immediate attendance on him, and gave him the needful instructions, for the place he was destined to fill, as his successor in the prophetic office.* Their mutual expressions of pious friendship previous to their separation were instructive and edifying. Ask, said the old prophet to his friend, "what I shall do for thee before I be taken away from thee." "I pray thee, said Elisha, that a double portion of thy spirit may rest upon me."

* 1 Kings xix. 19—21.

What are the friendships of the world when compared with this ?—We see an aged Minister of God about to ascend. But he could not leave the world until he had performed the last kind office to his beloved pupil. A parting blessing too was the object of Elisha's prayer. Their wishes united in the most valuable acquisition ;—"The spirit of Elijah rested on Elisha."

Happy for him, as it opened an extensive field of usefulness and felicity on earth, happy for his country and generation, as he was hereby qualified to succeed his master, as their guide, defence and stay.—Happy for the old prophet as it occupied his last moments, on earth, in benefiting his most beloved friend whom he left behind.—Happy for them both, as it served the interest of God's holy kingdom, as it united them in more endearing bonds, and prepared the way for mutual congratulation at their re-union, in the blessed mansions occupied by the spirits of the just made perfect.

In the words of the text we have the expressive exclamation of the young prophet, at the ascent of his master.—"My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof !"

The import of these expressions will be plain and significant to us, if we remember that the principal defence and safety of the ancient Asiatic nations, was in their cavalry. They were

accustomed to fighting either on horseback or in chariots, built for war, and armed in such a manner, as to be well adapted for defence and to be terrible to the enemy. These in a campaign country, were the principal strength of an army ; though they could not be brought to act with equal success in the hills and mountains. Hence that saying of the servants of the king of Syria, after their defeat by the men of Israel. “ Their Gods are Gods of the hills. Therefore they were stronger than we. But let us fight against them in the plain, and we shall be stronger than they !” *

From various scripture texts, it appears that God’s people were directed to place their confidence in him alone for protection and safety. That as a visible evidence of this they were not allowed to multiply horses and chariots, that when taken in war from their enemies the horses should be disabled from war and their chariots should be burned.†

From the whole it appears, that Israel was under the peculiar care of Jehovah, their God and king ; and that they were to manifest their dependence on him by remaining destitute of those means of defence, which were common to other nations.

* 1 Kings xx. 23. † Deut. xvii. 16. Josh. xi. 6—9.
Psalms xx. 7. Isai. ii. 7. xxxi. 1.

It is however important to remark, that altho' this chosen people were protected by God without the means adopted by other nations, it was not his good pleasure, usually, to defend and save them without any means. It is edifying to observe the wisdom and goodness of God in constituting means for the accomplishment of his designs, of wisdom and love, to his people. Though it would be equally easy with him to effect them without means. This is eminently illustrated, in his providential dispensations to his ancient chosen people. The blessings they enjoyed were usually conveyed from heaven to them, through the instrumentality of able and pious rulers, prophets and teachers.

This displays the intent and meaning of our text. Under the divine superintendance, Elijah had been to Israel all that which horses and chariots were designed to be to other nations: even their strength and stay. His venerable age, character, and relation to Elisha, as his guide and teacher, induced him to apply the honorable epithet of father. Hence, passing all other applications of the passage before us, we shall attend to the following proposition, viz. To show in what respects, able and pious teachers of religion, are the means of defence and safety to the people of God. It is admitted that safety is from God, as really, when brought to us through the agency of men, as when imme-

diately from him. It is also admitted, that the truth in the text applies to public men in all relations to society, who are able and who faithfully serve their generation by the will of God. But at present we apply it only to the able and pious teachers of religion.

We shall attempt to illustrate and confirm it by the following observations, viz.

1. The public teachers of religion are qualified and appointed by God for this purpose. Scripture history abundantly confirms this observation.

Moses was designed by God for a public teacher of religion. Provision was therefore made for his education, in Egyptian, (as well as Hebrew) learning. He was then carried through the school of adversity in a strange land, employed in the solitary and contemplative life of a shepherd. At length he received the divine commission constituting him the leader and shepherd of the flock of Israel. Great and difficult were the duties of his office. How could he have discharged them without that distinguished share of grace, of gifts and learning with which he was endued? Who would have guided the chosen tribes to the land of liberty and rest had there not been a Moses?

The duties of a public teacher require a sound

understanding, and other mental powers active and vigorous. A well cultivated mind and a heart enlarged in the service of God, and for the good of men. Without each of these, and especially this last, there is small ground to hope that the teacher will be found to be "the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof."

Hence we may rest in the comfortable prospect, that when it pleases God to use any one for this purpose he will raise up and qualify him; and that he calls to this important service those only whom he hath first qualified to perform it. Such he calls to it and assists them in it, and to such the promises of the divine presence and assistance are made. The manner of his constituting public teachers, and inducting them to their office has been various in the different ages of the church: but all terminating in the same object. The persons are marked out, either by the immediate agency of God, or by him through the agency of man. But always so as to imply the importance of the before named qualifications.

2. The instructions of public teachers, who are qualified for their work, are designed and adapted to guide, protect and save their hearers. These instructions have been various, as to form and circumstances, in the different ages of the world; but have always been adapted to the capacity and state of man, to lead him to the true

knowledge of God, of himself and the way to perfect and durable felicity.

Under the christian revelation they are abundantly clear.

It is the object of the public teacher to lead his hearers to be wise and happy, by instructing them concerning the being and perfections of the one living and true God.—The nature, extent and perfection of his providential and moral government.—The nature, relations, and prospects of man as an accountable being.—The extent and perfection of the moral law, and the sin and ruin of man as a transgressor.—Utterly depraved, and justly condemned and in a hopeless state, without the intervention of sovereign grace.—And the wonderful method of grace for man, exhibited in the mediatorial system, through which there is complete salvation for the most guilty of our race who fly for refuge, to the hope set before them in the gospel.—By an exhibition of these and other connected truths, the public teacher leads his hearers to the light of life; and if they receive the truth in the love of it, they will not fail of obtaining in the final issue, complete deliverance from the ruins of the apostacy and an inheritance among all those who are sanctified through faith in Christ Jesus.

3. The example, of good public teachers, is excellently adapted to enforce their instructions,

so as to protect, guide, and save their hearers. Notwithstanding the imperfections of the present state, good public teachers do in a measure exemplify their instructions, by their pious conversation. This, above most other things, is adapted to influence their hearers, by fixing a strong conviction on their minds of the truth and importance of their instructions; the guilty and miserable state of man, as a sinner, the great and awful danger of final ruin, the necessity of gospel grace, the preciousness of Christ, the excellency of christianity, and the worth of an interest in the divine favor. The influence of example is well known to be great. That of superiors has peculiar advantage; in which relation, public instructors are generally viewed by most of their hearers.

If they are possessed of a candid and ingenuous mind, in matters of religion, they cannot fail of profiting by the combined influence of good instruction and pious example.

Man is exposed to many evils from the corruptions of his own heart, from the temptations of the world, and especially from evil men, and from the great adversary of good, "who goeth about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour."*

* i Peter v. 8.

The instructions of wisdom and the example of good men united, are excellently adapted to guide him in his way, to protect him from all these enemies and bring him to final peace and safety.

The bible history of ancient Israel is eminently adapted to illustrate and confirm the truth we are considering. While Moses and Joshua lived, and while the Elders remained who over-lived Joshua, the people obeyed the commandments of the Lord ; but when these were removed, they turned to idolatry. The same truth is established by the history of the good leaders and the evil ones in Judah down to the Babylonish captivity. When they had good kings and priests, they kept the divine commands ; but no sooner were these removed and succeeded by evil ones, than the people departed from the Lord.

The history of good Jehoiada deserves our attention. He was an able and faithful instructor, and his example confirmed the truth of what he taught. In consequence of this, the kingdom was restored from the very corrupt state, into which it had fallen under the usurpation of the wicked Athaliah, and the people followed the Lord all the days of Jehoiada, and he was exceedingly venerable in their eyes. The inspired writer of the history informs us, that, " Jehoiada waxed old and was full of days when he died,

an hundred and thirty years old was he when he died. : And they buried him in the city of David, among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, both towards God, and toward his house."*

4. The influence of public teachers in preparing others to succeed them, when they shall be removed, is highly beneficial to the church of God. It is usually one part of the labor of eminent teachers in religion to form the minds of youthful students, to fill important places hereafter. By this, divine knowledge is preserved in the world, and able and well qualified public teachers are provided for the church ; and thus, from generation to generation, there is a happy supply to repair the waste of time and death.

Thus was the prophet Elijah employed in his day, and Elisha after him, in training up "the sons of the prophets," for important service, in their day, and to transmit to the children of future times, the knowledge of divine truth.

Thus also are eminent teachers employed in this and former ages. Some propagate divine knowledge by oral instructions, and some by their writings, and some by both, especially since the art of printing has been known. By each of these, the usefulness of able and pious

* 2 Chronicles xxiv. 15, 16.

public teachers is much advanced. How vast is the benefit even to us, of this very distant age, from the writings of Moses and the prophets and other sacred penmen of the old testament and the new ! and how great will be the debt of future ages to the end of time ! Yea, may we not expect that the blessed in heaven will be wiser, better, and more happy forever, not only from their knowledge of the scriptures, obtained in this life, but also from their advance even there, in happifying discoveries in the deep mysteries wrapped up in these divine books ! May not the pleasing reflection extend, (with the limitation due to the best publications of uninspired man) to the many excellent books on divine subjects, which have been published in this and the preceding ages ? What an accumulation of benefits to the church of God, advancing in an ever increasing proportion, from this source ; and how abundant the evidence that able and pious public teachers, are “the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof !”

5. Able and pious public teachers are the defence and safety of the church by their prayers. Though it is equally easy with God to grant blessings to his people, without the application of this or any other mean ; yet it hath seemed good to unerring wisdom to establish this connexion, and fix the plan of bestowment in answer to prayer. Notwithstanding the supplications of the most pious can make no change in the coun-

fels of God, they may prepare the subject for the reception of the good sought, and answer other purposes of fixing this connexion, which in the divine mind are amply sufficient.

That such a connexion is fixed in the revealed will of God, between the prayers of his people and the bestowment of the needed blessings, is evident from the history of the prayers of Abel, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, the pious kings of Judah, the prophets of the old testament and the apostles of the new. Men of this description are represented by God as those who "make up the hedge and stand in the gap before him for the land, that he should not destroy it."* Such in their day were Abraham,† Moses,‡ and Aaron,§ and Phineas, and such, in all ages, are the able and pious leaders of the church of God. What christian therefore can hesitate to believe that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.¶ So manifest is the truth that able and pious public teachers are the defence, protection, and safety of the church, or, they are "the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof."

IMPROVEMENT.

1. Able and pious leaders in the church of Christ are a great blessing. These take a place and fill a relation in the christian church, in many respects, similar to that of Elijah, Jehoiada, and

* Ezek. xxii. 30. † Gen. xviii. 23, 32. ‡ Num. xiv. 11—20. xvi. 44. § Chap. xxv. 6, 13. ¶ James v. 16.

other pious leaders under the ancient dispensation.

Their ministrations ought to be thankfully received and wisely improved. The wisdom and goodness of divine institutions, obvious indeed in other cases, are eminently conspicuous in this. The great things, which God effects through the instrumentality of these earthen vessels, abundantly "prove the excellency of the power to be of God and not of man," and in various respects this method of divine operation is adapted to the character of God and the condition of man. How deeply doth it concern those who are employed in the christian ministry, to magnify their office, by discharging its duties to the best of their ability : and to see that the ministry be not blamed through any fault on their part.

Animating is the thought of imitating though at a humble distance the piety, the wisdom, the philanthropy of Elijah, of Jehoiada and other venerable and useful characters under the ancient dispensation and the new. The hope of uniting (in the blessed exercises and enjoyments of futurity) with the long list of faithful servants in the house of God, must exceedingly animate us, in the prospect of that world, and render the labours and sorrows of the present state, light and momentary.

2. The aged and wise in the christian ministry should do their utmost for the instruction and

improvement of their younger brethren in divine knowledge, and to encourage them to diligence and fidelity in their work ; and the younger should improve the season of benefiting by their instructions, before they are removed.

Agreeable to the language in our context, the aged should say to the young, "ask what we shall do for you before we be taken away from you." And the young should reply we "pray that a double portion of your spirit may rest on us." "This is truly friendship in death"—how amiable ! how congenial to the soft and tender emotions of christian love, in the near prospect of separation ! Great are the benefits to be derived to the church of God by such friendly intercourse between the aged in the christian ministry and the young. By this, the treasure of theological knowledge, the result of many studious years, and of the experience of a long life, may be, in a happy degree, transmitted from age to youth, and the fund of religious knowledge and experience may be constantly accumulating ; and the wise and good will live in their successors.

3. When the aged and venerable in the christian ministry, are removed from our world, successors are called to take up the lamentation in our text.

Such are "the men who make up the hedge and stand in the gap."—Their removal indicates the divine displeasure. They are often taken

from the evil to come. Thus it was in the case of the good king Josiah, and in many others. When men eminently useful in the church on earth, are removed from our world, the means of our protection and safety are thus far removed; and we are eminently exposed to be the prey to our enemies. This is no less true in regard to the interests of the church of God, than to those of society in the present world. God presides over both and protects them, but he doth it by the instrumentality of those excellent men who stand in the gap. Under such divine rebukes, therefore, survivors should be deeply humbled; for however it may be in mercy to the departed, it is an expression of divine displeasure to them for their sins. They should, therefore, accept the punishment of them, and acknowledge the righteousness of God, in their affliction. They should learn by it, the great evil of sin, as being against God, displayed in the extensive reign of death and all other evils. They should be deeply humbled under the tokens of divine displeasure—they should “be still and know that he is God.”

They should learn the vanity of the world, the dying nature of earthly good, and the uncertainty of the dearest enjoyments below the skies. Above all, they should learn their entire dependence on God, and turn off their expectations from creatures, and place them on him, cast themselves and all their concerns on his grace,

“and be careful for nothing, but in every thing, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let their requests be made known.”

They should not, however, in mourning for the venerable dead “sorrow as those who have no hope,” for as Jesus died and rose again, even so, those who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.” This “wipes the reproach of saints away and clears the honor of his word.” By this it appears that “he is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city,” even “an house not made with hands eternal in the heavens.”

Let us hail the spirits of the just made perfect ! The resurrection morning and the complete and unfading glories of immortality ! Blessed state where sin and sorrow, pain and death, never come. Where all tears are wiped away. Where our departed christian friends, and the long list of our venerable and pious ancestors, “have entered into peace are resting in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.”*

Will not the hope of a reunion with them in the world of spirits, dissipate the dark and melancholy gloom which hangs round their grave, and dry the falling tear—rather teach us to be, “as sorrowful yet always rejoicing.” Holy joy, sweet peace and everlasting consolation, mingle in the sorrows of parting christian friends.

* Isaiah lvii. 2.

“ The chamber where the good man meets his fate,
Is privileg'd above the common walk
Of virtuous life ; quite in the verge of heav'n.”

4. Surviving leaders in the church of God should take up the falling mantle of the venerable dead, and say “ where is the Lord God of Elijah ?” They should imitate their spirit, their zeal and their active fidelity.

The respectful debt of christian friendship, in the funeral solemnities, being paid, they recollect that to do the highest honor to their departed friends they must emulate their virtues, and “ follow them wherein they followed Christ.” That the removal of men, eminent in the church of God, leaves a gap in the walls of the city which must be guarded by others. A vacant place in the field of labor which must be supplied by fresh hands, or by the more active and unremitting exertions of survivors, or by both. Survivors must be “ baptized for the dead.” They must advance to fill the ranks left vacant by the fall of those before them. In such a case, how powerful the motives to christian ministers, for unceasing labors in the cause of truth, and for united supplications to “ the Lord of the harvest that he would send forth laborers into his harvest.” “ By whom Lord shall Jacob rise for he is small.”

5. We are called to a particular application of the subject to the present solemnity. In celebrating the funeral of this venerable minister of Christ, we are constrained to repeat the language in our text : “ Our father, our father, the char-

iot of Israel and the horsemen thereof." In how many respects he was so, is most fully known by those whose intercourse with him was longest and most intimate. Furnished, by the Father of lights, with mental powers eminently adapted for critical and patient investigation, and early devoted to literary pursuits, he passed the usual course of academic studies, and graduated at Yale College in New-Haven in the year 1741, just as a most uncommon and extensive attention to religion was beginning to appear in New-England and elsewhere. Having hopefully become a subject of the saving grace of God, he resolved to consecrate his life and talents to the service of God in the gospel of his Son. He wisely chose the eminent Mr. Edwards, then of Northampton for his director in his theological studies.

Having finished the course of his preparatory study, he was regularly recommended to preach the gospel, and in due time was inducted into the pastoral office.

His field of ministerial labors has been at Great Barrington in Massachusetts, and at Newport in Rhode Island : to this last his stated labors have been directed ever since the year 1770, a few years excepted, when the congregation was dispersed by the events of the revolutionary war. Most of those who were active in his settlement here, have gone before him to the world of spirits, the few who remain are waiting the summons. Though his days were prolonged beyond

the common lot, we cannot witness the removal of so much wisdom, piety and usefulness from the church but with the deepest sensibility.

Those who best knew him and are most able to judge of ministerial eminence, will agree that he was, even beyond most evangelical ministers, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof, in all those respects, which have been already noticed. For this important work he was eminently qualified by natural endowments, acquired knowledge, and divine grace.

His instructions as a christian teacher were plain, clear, impressive and entertaining to the attentive hearer, conveying the most essential and practical knowledge. His example confirmed to his hearers the truths and duties which he taught. He was eminently useful to young ministers and to those preparing for the christian ministry, by verbal instructions, and by various publications on theological subjects. All his printed works may be read with profit, and especially the system of divinity in two volumes, which he published in the latter part of his life.

We add, that he was the defence and safety to the church by his prayers ; in which we have abundant reason to believe he was devout, ardent and persevering to the last. In these respects and others not mentioned he was a pillar in the church below, a man to make up the hedge and stand in the gap.

While we drop the filial tear in committing

his venerable dust to the house of silence, as a common loss to the church on earth, still more oppressive sorrow must pierce the hearts of his family connections and the people of his charge.

Yet while the bereaved widow dwells on the sources of grief, she ought not to forget the springs of consolation. She is well assured that this event is the work of infinite perfection. She doubts not but the removal of her best friend on earth, is an important accession to the general assembly and church of the first born, who are written in heaven, to the spirits of just men made perfect. She firmly believes that hereby God is glorified, the Redeemer exalted, and his kingdom benefited. That this event is well adapted to wean her affections from earth—to smooth her own passage through the dark valley, and animate her in the prospect of joining that blessed and holy society, where so many of her christian friends are gathered together and are waiting her arrival. Thankful for all the good she has enjoyed on earth, in the company of the saints, and for the opportunity given her, by the near connexion between them, to minister to the comfort and promote the usefulness of that servant of the Lord. Keeping in mind, that though christian friends and ministers die, Jesus Christ lives and is the same, yesterday, to day and forever : she will cast all her cares and sorrows on him and follow him as the shepherd and bishop of her soul, and realize his most gracious promise that he will never leave her nor forsake her.

May the surviving children of this venerable father so wisely improve his removal, that they may be secure in the protection and favor of that father in heaven, who will guide them by counsel and afterward receive them to glory, and leave to their children, when they die, the blessed hope concerning them, which they entertain respecting their father.

The members of this church and congregation, will notice the work of the Lord and consider the operation of his hand. Separation by death between a minister and his people, is an event weighty and important. His province is to watch for souls as they who must give account; theirs to take heed how they hear and to hear so that their souls may live. In the review of many past years under the ministry of their late Pastor, this people will enquire how they have heard, what religious improvement they have made and how they are prepared to meet him, and what is infinitely more solemn, to meet their judge, and render their account for the use of their religious privileges and for all things done in the body.

May they so remember his words as to practise the holy religion he taught them, and teach the same diligently to their children, and after all the calamities suffered by this society and this town, in those years which have passed over our heads, may the good shepherd take them by the hand and lead them in the right way. And though the Lord hath given them the bread of

adversity and the water of affliction, yet may not their teachers be removed into a corner any more, but may their eyes see their teachers, and may their ears "hear a voice behind them saying this is the way walk ye in it, when they turn to the right hand and when they turn to the left."*

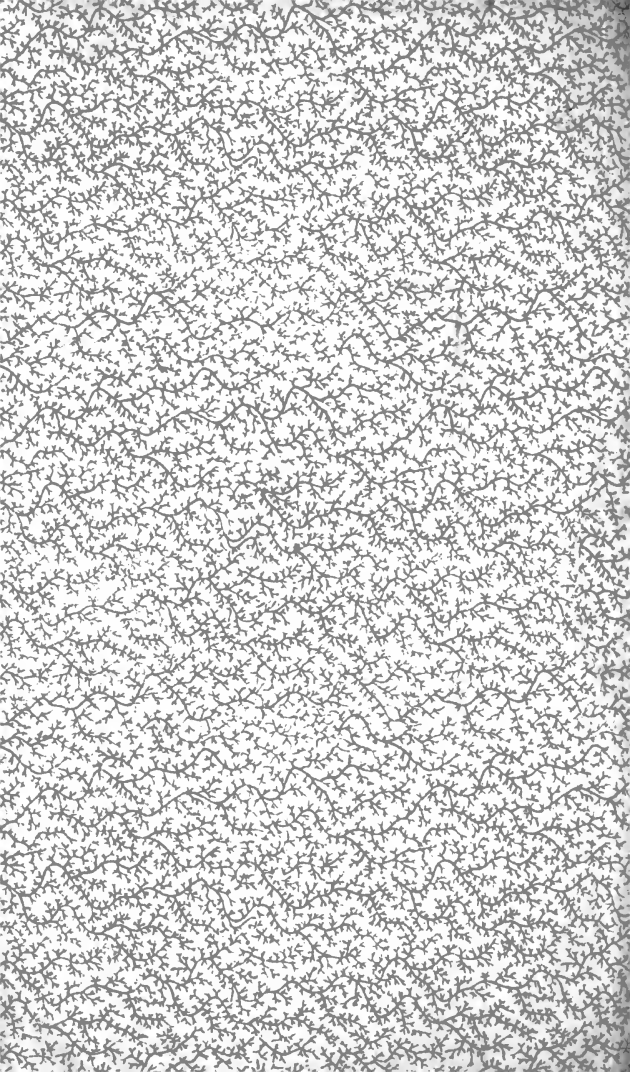
CONCLUSION.

The solemnities of this day address to all of us present the solemn warning voice, *Be ye also ready*. No one has more cause to apply it than the speaker. An intimate acquaintance, of more than forty years, has furnished to him much advantage for divine instruction from this venerable father in our Israel.

Advance in life and attending infirmities admonish him, and his companions in years, that they must shortly put off these tabernacles. May they be ready for their departure, by laboring with diligence and fidelity in the service of God, and standing with their loins girt and their lamps trimmed and burning. And may this assembly always have these things in remembrance, after the departure of their ministers, in as much as we have not followed cunningly devised fables, in making known to them the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

* Isaiah xxx. 20, 21.





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